

Development of Internationalization into Strategic Policy Area in Light of the Merger Process

*A case study of Oslo and Akershus University
College of Applied Sciences (HiOA)*

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Abstract

This master thesis investigates the interaction between Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) environmental pressures coming from a number of constituents and organizational strategies with respect to internationalization as a strategic policy area. This study adopts a case study approach. Using document analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews, it investigates the way merger between OUC and AUC (the two institutions that became HiOA in 2011) effect the integration of both colleges' strengths regarding internationalization dimension, and then the analysis takes it further to examine the extent to which the HiOA's environment contributed to developing internationalization as a policy area and how the university college responds to it. Next, the study sheds light on the development of internationalization as a strategic policy area at HiOA since 2011 with respect to its organization, funding and governance structures. Finally, the paper examines the interpretation of internationalization as a strategic policy area at the newly merged HiOA.

This thesis analyses internationalization from an organizational perspective and it primarily is based on the institutional leadership and the administrative staff responses as they tend put greater emphasis on strategic issues. The analytical framework applied to this thesis is built upon two major theoretical perspectives on organizational change: resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Pfeffer 1982) and institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1991). By highlighting the convergent aspects of the two theories, the analysis of this thesis is based on Oliver's (1991) typology of strategic responses and characterization of environmental pressures. Oliver's framework rests on the assumption that organizations are affected by their institutional structure, however, they are capable to make strategic choices to the extent to which they try to manipulate their environment (Oliver, 1991).

The findings indicate various interpretations of internationalization within HiOA as well as diverse institutional rationales for internationalization amongst the leadership and the administration. The underlying observation shows that internationalization is rather perceived to be strongly connected to research, education and the national policy; taken for granted character of institutional rules, external resources that come through it and it is seen as an opportunity for the further development and acquiring resources with the ultimate goal to achieve the university status. The organization of internationalization as a whole policy area

within the university college in regard to its funding and governance structures is relatively well established, which was chiefly achieved by the integration of both university colleges (OUC's and AUC's) strengths regarding internationalization dimension as a result of merger. However, even though the findings indicate that internationalization has developed rather strong strategic policy area, it could be argued that internationalization to some extent is still under the process of active development as there are the number of aspects in regard to internationalization that are not functioning optimally. This perceived to be one of the results of the merger. Once the organizational elements of merger process are relatively in its place, internationalization is seen to be coming back from its margining position, however, feebly adapted to the new organizational structure and the new organizational culture of the newly merged university college.

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Abbreviations

AUC/HiAk	Akershus University College/ Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus
AFI	Work Research Centre
EAIE	European Association for International Education
EMMP	Erasmus Mundus Master Program
HiOA	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences
HE	Higher Education (sector)
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
IaH	Internationalization at home
IO	International Office
OUC/HiO	Oslo University College / Høgskolen i Oslo
KD	Ministry of Education and Research (Norway, 2006 -)
KUF	Ministry of Church, Education and Research (Norway, 1991 - 2002)
MER/UFD	Ministry of Education and Research (Norway) / Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet (Norway, 2002-...).
NOVA	Norwegian Social Research
QR	The Norwegian Quality Reform
SIU	The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
SVA	Centre for Welfare and Labor Research

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1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the ways in which one higher education institution (HEI) in Norway that has experienced a merger and is using internationalization as one policy area to further its goals to become internationalized under its environmental and external influences. In other words, it analyses internationalization strategic policy area by employing the case of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA), the largest university college in Norway and a relatively new institution that has been established four years ago following the merger of when Oslo University College (OUC) and Akershus University College (AUC). In light of the European Bologna process and the Quality Reform, internationalization has been made a topic of vital importance in the Norwegian national HE context.

HiOA is the third largest state higher education institution (HEI), and it is with its 17 000 students and 2000 employees a major player in the Norwegian education sector as a provider of knowledge and qualified labor to Norwegian society (DBH 2014). HiOA is located in the metropolitan region, which has a quarter of the country's population. It is also the region that is growing fast and, moreover, the population growth is particularly high among the group of those people who will seek higher education. This is a growth that is expected to continue and, therefore, the need for new study places will increase. For this reason, in the years ahead a great need for the courses HiOA offers, such as health and social service personnel, teachers, preschool teachers and engineers, is expected. HiOA has pointed out its social responsibility to ensure the supply of labor through a significant increase in the number of study places. These are the significant demands and expectations for the university college from the state, local authorities, public and private employers, etc.

HiOA's history is based on several mergers. HiOA was formed on 1 August 2011 when Oslo University College (OUC) and Akershus University College (AUC) merged together into one college. However, the college's traditions go many years back in time, as some of HiOA's education programs have existed for over 100 years. Starting from the end of the 1970s up until 1994, the number of study programs, which HiOA offers today, including engineering, teacher and nurse education, were spread across several university colleges, which were autonomous institutions under the influence of the Regional University Colleges Board in Oslo and Akershus. However, when the non-university HE sector in Norway underwent a

major reorganization in 1994 as a result of Norwegian university college reform, 18 independent colleges in Oslo area merged together into one college - Oslo University College. As of today, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) is currently Norway's largest state university college in the country.

1.1 Rationale and purpose

As an analytical point of departure, the main interest is based on Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus - HiOA). The noteworthy reason to investigate this specific institution is because it is a recently merged university college, which is now (as of 2015) is going through organizational and structural change processes, which are the final result of the merger. In the higher education literature, mergers are often discussed as a moment of change when two institutions integrate the administration, the study programs, faculties, staff policies, government structure and institutional strategy/policy (Harman and Harman 2003, Kyvik & Stensaker 2013; Lang 2003; Goedegebuure & Meek 1991; Goedegebuure 1992). Over the last decades, mergers or amalgamations between HEIs have become an increasingly common phenomenon across many HE systems in the world (Skodvin, 1999). The important part is that mergers have mostly been used by national governments to address a number of problems on one hand, and to achieve a variety of purposes on the other hand. Individual institutions have used mergers notably for major restructuring and for distinguishing the main problems of fragmentation amongst non-university institutions, i.e. low quality and efficiency as well as lack of academic and financial resources (Harman and Harman 2003). In fact, the most extensive use of mergers creates changes in HE systems (ibid). in fact, Norway did not represent any exception in this regard.

For this reason, this thesis sets its focus on HiOA, which is a particularly interesting case in terms of its strategic aims with respect to organizing and developing internationalization policy area of the university college, and how these are planned to be achieved.

The reason why I look specifically at internationalization within a merged institution is based on the fact that the concept of it is seen as a central and an integral part in recent Norwegian

higher education policy (St. meld. nr. 14, 2008-2009). The academic justification for increased internationalization asserts the idea that internationalization is a sure sign of academic quality (Gornitzka and Stensaker 2004). In other words and more generally, the answer to the question of why Norwegian HEIs have to engage in internationalization, and even more specifically, why HiOA as a merged, aspiring university college would select internationalization as a priority and an important tool for further development, can appear quite sheer. Firstly, Norwegian HEIs' motive for engaging in internationalization is seen as a crucial means for ensuring the quality of education and research and increasing competence within their own institutions (Frølich, 2005).. Moreover, increasing quality through international cooperation is believed to motivate students and staff in becoming more internationally oriented. Secondly, national policy expects HEIs to promote internationalization in order to increase competitiveness for researchers and students, international funding, which eventually indicates the extent of the institution's international relations and strategic partnerships (Frølich, 2005; 2006).

Therefore, my aim is threefold.

First, to look at how two similar yet diverse university colleges (the largest, leading university college in the country (OUC), and the relatively small professionally oriented college, in a rural setting (AUC)), interpret internationalization in a before they were merged, and further to examine the way two internationalization approaches, traditions, practices, etc. integrated together into HiOA in order to create a coherent approach to internationalization. Second, to examine how HiOA as the merged institution is organizing the internationalization policy within the institution. Third, to investigate the extent to which internationalization policy is influenced by the developments in its environment and the way in which the relatively new institution handles and responds to them.

Another interesting point brings out the importance when we have merger of a smaller institution and a larger one, which is the case for HiOA. What does it mean? Does it mean that the larger one (OUC) determines the framework conditions for the new institution (HiOA), and smaller institution (AUC) is being absorbed into the departments and faculties of the larger one? Or maybe the smaller one can have a greater influence than the larger one, because of the fact that the larger one does not have an intention to dominate the smaller one?

What happens particularly with the internationalization policy when two institutions merge together in a specific setting, and what kind of assumptions we can formulate with respect to post merger situation?

In light of this thesis, and in order to examine how the internationalization policy area is organized within HiOA it is also important to explain why it is organized in the way it is organized. With the regard to the university college's a) environment and it's external influence; and b) institutional template the following assumptions have been put forward:

Assumption 1: The newly merged university college (HiOA) without any radical change tries to integrate and to combine the internationalization policies and internationalization practices of the two previously separate institutions (OUC and AUC).

Assumption 2: HiOA endeavors to actively innovate its internationalization policies and practices and to streamline more efficient the way it operates within the institution.

Assumption 3: Internationalization in one way or another is related to the development in its environment. Hence, HiOA is muddling through and has not yet come into the phase where the institution reflects strategically on it.

It is also important to shed the light on the way internationalization policy is being developed, organized, governed and funded in an amalgamated institution, and consequently, which role it plays in the merged aspiring HEI and its environmental context. Even though the focus is set on the institutional level of HiOA, in the frame of this thesis, it is also important to pay attention to national and international policy developments with respect to internationalization as a policy aspect (Knight 2004).

Definition of the main concepts

As one of the main units under analysis for this thesis are internationalization strategic policy area, strategy plan, environment and environmental influence, it is highly important to be clear and provide key explanations of what is meant by these concepts and what they imply in terms of this study.

This thesis takes Gornitzka's (1999) interpretation of policy as a point of departure:

"... policies are not simply guidelines for action, but also expressions of faith, values and beliefs and instruments of education" (ibid:15).

Thus, I take one step further and distinguish *internationalization strategic policy area* at HiOA as the set of essential principles and objectives HiOA seeks to achieve and preserve in its own interest. The guidelines and strategies are formulated and enforced by the governing body, leadership of HiOA to direct and/or limit institution's actions as to internationalization in pursuit of long-term goals that are seen as benefiting for the whole institution. This definition does not exclude the guidelines, calls and incentives coming from the government.

Due to the changes in the international operational setting and due to the increasing multiculturalism and diversity of Norwegian HE, environment creates a number of expectations on HEIs, HiOA in particular. Thus, the institutional *strategic plans* as well as the strategy plan for internationalization¹, in light of this thesis, are seen as the significant key documents that guide the institution in the certain direction and support the attainment of its goals to consolidate internationalization.

To investigate how *the environment* influences the way internationalization becomes strategic policy area is mobilized and developed at HiOA, first and foremost, it is important to clarify what the concept of 'environment' implies. The environment in itself consists of a number of different constituents: actors, stakeholders, resources, linkages, laws, other institutions and organizations, and the society shapes the possibilities for action (Fumasoli 2011). In other words, overall the Bologna Process can be perceived as one of the main environmental influences² on internationalization in this study. Consequently, following the Bologna Process, the Quality Reform represents the Norwegian political response to the Bologna process (Frølich 2005; Frølich and Stensaker 2005). Therefore, internationalization policies at HiOA might be interpreted as responses to these environmental and external developments.

In terms of this master thesis it can be argued that institutional strategies for internationalization are being formulated in accordance to different developments in the institutional environment. For that reason, institutions are seen to be deeply embedded in their environment by means of which it establishes multiple relations.

The main concepts that provide better understanding of what particularly is meant when those concepts are employed into practice are presented above. More clarifications and

¹ In this study it is also referred as the Action Plan for Internationalization

² Education programs guided by the EU have also become a significant tool to enhance internationalization.

² Education programs guided by the EU have also become a significant tool to enhance internationalization. Given the fact that Norway is not a member of the EU, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research has defined the EU as the most significant partner within the area of higher education and research (MER 2011a).

conceptualizations discussed in the analytical framework (see Chapter 3).

1.2 Problem formulation

The formulation of the research questions guiding this study start from the basic interest in the internationalization policy area within merged institution. More specifically, it is interesting to investigate how a merged higher education institution is responding to this policy area.

Based on the above considerations in the previous sections, this thesis aims to use the merger process as a moment of organizational development of HEI and further investigate the way the new internationalization policy is being organized and developed within a merged aspiring university college. To narrow down the vast field of organizational change and the possible factors that can influence it, the main interest of this thesis will be focused on how the internationalization policy is being handled within the new institution that was going through the organizational change process. The changes and development will mostly be examined in the area of organizational aspects including: the organization, governance and funding³ of internationalization within the merged institution.

Specification of this underlying theoretical interest in terms of clarification of the focus of analysis leads to the overall research problem:

Has internationalization become a strategic policy area at HiOA? If so, how has this been achieved?

The overall research question refers to the situation after the merger was formalized in 2011. I am interested in examining how internationalization in the newly merged university college takes shape, and furthermore, to examine the factors that influenced the way internationalization has developed into a strategic policy area within the institution in the four years since HiOA merged. This is mirrored by the overall research design of the thesis.

³ I refer to internationalization as a whole policy area, where the concept of “organization” includes both governance and funding dimensions.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to provide an answer to the overall research question and to satisfy my research interest, the following research questions will be addressed:

- 1) To which extent did the merger effect the integration of both university colleges' (OUC's and AUC's) strengths regarding the internationalization dimension?
- 2) To which extent has the developments in HiOA's environment contributed to making internationalization into a strategic policy area? And how, if so, has HiOA responded to it?
- 3) How has internationalization been handled (developed) within HiOA?
 - a) How has internationalization been governed within HiOA?
 - b) How has internationalization been organized within HiOA?
 - c) What are the main sources of funding for internationalization at HiOA?
- 4) How has internationalization been interpreted at HiOA after the merger was formalized in 2011?

The first research question aims at examining institutional policy with respect to internationalization at both institutions, namely OUC and AUC, before the merger took place in 2011 and, to analyze if this policy has been affected and further altered in the new institution. Secondly, to understand what HiOA can do to manage their internationalization strategic policy area in a more effective way, the second question aims to analyze the environment in which the institution operates and how this environment is affecting internationalization strategic policy area within the institution. Moreover, it is important to examine if there is any external conditions or pressures that HiOA was facing with respect to internationalization from the number of actors. Next, the third question conducts the inquiry one step further by exploring the way internationalization policy was organized in the administration and the faculties after the actual merger have taken place. Finally, the last research question investigates the interpretation of internationalization as strategic policy area in the newly merged institution (HiOA) as it will help to understand why internationalization is organized the way it organized at HiOA.

1.4 Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into 7 chapters. Chapter 1 has already presented general introduction, rationale and purpose for the study; problem formulation and the four research questions have also been formulated.

Chapter 2 presents the contextual background of the case, an overview over the Norwegian HE system is presented; and then, the focus turns to the development of mergers in HE and in Norway. The last section of this chapter sets focus on the development of the internationalization in Norwegian HE sector.

Chapter 3 sketches the theoretical foundations and provides discussion of the selection of the underlying theories on the organizational change: resource dependence and institutional theory. To study the process of the organizational development of internationalization as a strategic policy area in HiOA, first the two main theoretical perspectives on organizations separately: resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Pfeffer, 1982) and institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Selznick, 1984; Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Scott, 1995) are presented. Further, using Oliver's (1991) typology of the environmental pressure will provide the basis for explaining the organizational development that took place within HiOA with respect to internationalization. Additional theoretical building blocks will also be discussed. In the end, the analytical framework for the thesis will be presented.

Chapter 4 explains the choice of research design and describes the methodology used in the given case study, followed by the overview of the empirical setting of the study in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 elucidates the key developments over the way internationalization area has been shaped in OUC and AUC prior to the merger, thereby addressing the 1st research question of “(1) To what extent did the merger effect the integration of both university colleges’ (OUC’s and AUC’s) strengths regarding the internationalization dimension?”. Consequently it will shed light on the way internationalization as a strategic policy area is organized at HiOA at the moment (as of 2015). Next, it will be addressed how HiOA follows up on its most important strategic documents (Strategy 2020 and the Strategy for achieving university status) and will analyze how these documents apply to internationalization. Towards the end of the chapter I look at how HiOA presents its international policy goals in the key documents.

Chapter 6 provides the discussion and analysis of the findings from the study. The analysis of the findings in relation to the research questions will be done in this chapter as a way of understanding the concepts that have been discussed earlier in this thesis. First, the analysis of the outcomes of the findings will be laid out before the discussion delves into the relationship between the findings and concepts from the literature reviewed and analytical framework.

Chapter 7, the concluding chapter of the master thesis, offers a brief summary of the research project. Then, the key findings and their relevance to the four research questions will be highlighted.

2 Contextual Background

This chapter presents the background information of the institution (HiOA) and higher education (HE) system in the study. First, a general short overview of the Norwegian HE is presented; then, the focus turns to the development of mergers in HE system in Norway and the case of the study will also be examined. The last section of this chapter sets focus on the development of the internationalization of Norwegian HE sector.

2.1 Norwegian Landscape of Higher Education System

Higher education (HE) is believed to be one of the main reasons for producing and developing a knowledge-based economy. Today education is a key to economic, social and cultural development.

“To understand Norwegian higher education system, it is important to note that it is shaped within the context of a young nation, (the oldest university established in the capital Oslo in 1811), a small country (app. 4,5 million inhabitants) and an oil-producing economy, with good conditions to achieve the welfare state policy objectives in a social democratic regime, placing great emphasis on higher education as a strategy to reduce social inequality”

(Vabø & Aamodt 2008 in Ahola et al., 2014: 59)

Norway is known as for its political and economic stability and a first-class education system. In fact, the Norwegian HE system strives to be highly research-based and aims to be among the best ones in the world with respect to both academic levels and breadth of participation and completion rates (MER, 2007).

First and foremost, HE in Norway is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research (see Appendix 2). All the public HEIs are state-run, however, they have strong academic and administrative autonomy. The Norwegian public HE system as of today (2014) consists of three types of institutions: research universities, scientific colleges and state colleges. There are 8 state-run universities, 9 specialized institutions at the university level, 20 state university colleges, 2 national academies of the arts and 16 private colleges (SIU,

2014). A private HE sector is also presented. In 2013 a total number of 269 000 students were registered in tertiary education, which is approximately 45000 more than in 2003 (SBB, 2014). Approximately 15700 Norwegians were studying at tertiary institutions abroad in autumn 2013 (ibid). In comparison, around 11 600 new international students attended HEIs in Norway in 2012 (MCESI, 2014: 21). It is important to note that even though all the above-mentioned HEIs are responsible for the quality of their own instruction, dissemination of knowledge and conducting basic research and researcher training, NOKUT (Norwegian Quality Assurance Agency in Education), still performs some checks in order to see if their educational plan meets national quality standards. All private and public institutions are subject to the authority of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The core principle of the Norwegian HE system is the concept “education for all”, which means an equal opportunity for all in access to education. This principle is reflected in the Norwegian tertiary system architecture that is constructed in a way to fulfill needs and demands of different groups of students, independent of cultural origin, political conviction or religious belief. Moreover, currently all public Norwegian universities and state university colleges do not charge any tuition fees (with the exception of some distance learning ventures), which means that approximately 96% of the costs of the education are covered by public funds (DBH, 2014)⁴.

The universities are comprehensive; approximately 86% of students are enrolled in public HEIs (Ahola et al., 2014: 60). They play a significant role in decentralizing access to higher education. The university colleges essentially offer three-year professional bachelor study programs (e.g. in nursing, social work, engineering, etc.), however, the professional programs in business administration and teacher training normally differ in lengths and take from one to five years of studies (MER, 2007). Nonetheless, some university colleges also offer master degree programs, and three of them are given the right to award doctorates in one or more subjects (MER, 2007). For more facts and numbers, see Appendix 2.

2.1.1 Changes in Norwegian Higher Education Policy

In the following paragraph, it is important to mention that Norwegian HE policy has been

⁴ Database for Statistikk om Høgre utdanning [Database for Statistics in Higher Education] <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no>

going through several significant turning points in its history.

Firstly, the Ottosen Commission (1966-70)⁵, introduced lifelong learning, new teaching methods and the social dimension of higher education, which laid the foundations for a modern massified HE system. Secondly, the Hernes Commission (1988)⁶ provided numerous improvements into the Norwegian HE system by creating “Network Norway”⁷, where the quality of teaching and research was strongly stimulated and institutional cooperation came notably into focus. After the continued expansion of the HE system, in the period by 1997, the rapidly increasing number of students applying for admission was observed (Bleiklie, 2009).

During the 1980s and 1990s, by the number of decisions in the Parliament, the binary system (university and university college) was disintegrated. As a result, the colleges were granted the right to: a) develop secondary, research-based degrees; b) take part in the training of researchers; c) hire professors; and, d) take part in fundamental as well as applied research and placing both universities and colleges under the common law in 1995 (Nyborg 2007). After the change of government, the state colleges were granted additional privileges, for example including the right to award doctoral degrees in some fields at some colleges. At the same time state colleges were renamed to university colleges, and there was an idea that some of these specific institutions might be “upgraded” to university status (Nyborg, 2007).

In 2001, the Ministry of Church, Education and Research introduced the White Paper “Do your duty – demand your rights” [Gjør din plikt - Krev din rett], which became a driving force for initiating the Quality Reform (St. Meld. Nr. 27: (2000-2001)). As a result, the 2003 Quality Reform has determined internationalization as one of the most significant premises for quality enhancement, student achievement and innovation in Norwegian HE sector. After the Quality Reform came into effect, the issue of internationalization was for the first time brought up to the forefront of Norwegian HE policy agenda. Essentially, it was focusing upon the international dimension of research, teaching and learning (Maassen et al., 2004).

Next, in 2006 the Government Commission for Higher Education (the Stjernø Commission)

5 *Kristan Ottosen* - a founding father of student services in Norway. *The Ottosen Commission* produced 5 reports, the first one estimating a need for 100 000 study places by 1985. The next one proposed a three-cycle main structure for university degrees, the first two cycles of 4 years and 2 years duration respectively.

6 *Gudmund Hernes* – professor, later Minister of Education and Research. *Hernes Commission* was followed up by a White Paper to Parliament in 1991.

7 *Network Norway* is a binary system of interacting institutions with a university and a college sector.

was appointed by the Norwegian Government in order to present the proposal on the development of Norwegian research and HE for a 20-year perspective. In January 2008 the Commission presented its report (NOU 2008: 3). The report set the main focus on increasing international competition, high quality research and accessible HE in Norway. Moreover, the report brings to the importance that more competition between HEIs would be advantageous for the quality of HE. Finally, the document suggests reducing the number of universities and colleges in the country through mergers and clearer profiling of institutions.

2.2 Mergers in Higher Education

Over the past three to four decades, mergers became a widespread phenomenon in tertiary education in various countries' policy agendas (Kyvik & Stensaker 2013). Numerous mergers between HEIs became a significant widespread turning point across many HE systems in number of countries all over the world, e.g. Australia, UK, China, South Africa, Netherlands, Finland, Denmark and Norway (Harman G. 2000; Harman & Harman 2008; Harman & Meek 2002; Botha 2001; Skodvin 1999, 2014; Kyvik & Stensaker 2013; Lang 2003; Goedegebuure & Meek 1991; Goedegebuure 1992; HEFCE 2012). In the above-mentioned countries, mergers were used as the government's specific tool to reorganize and restructure their HE sector (Skodvin 1999).

In HE literature on mergers, the concept has been defined in a number of different ways: mergers as a formal combination or amalgamation of two or more previously separate institutions into one new single organizational entity with the aim to more effectively meet external challenges and opportunities, to enhance competitive advantages and to merge for 'mutual growth'⁸ (see Martin and Samels 1994, Harman & Harman 2008, Skodvin 1999, Kyvik & Stensaker 2013, Goedegebuure & Meek 1991). A mix of different types of institutions are usually involved into a merger processes in higher education. Accordingly, Goedegebuure 1992: 24, Skodvin, 2014: 5, Goedegebuure & Meek, 1991: 129 define four different dimensions of mergers in higher education: a) horizontal mergers between institutions that operate in similar academic fields towards production of a similar type of

⁸ This thesis sets this particular form of merger into focus within the context of the scholarly literature on such types of mergers in HE, before proceeding to the specific case – the 1st September 2011 merger of Oslo University College and Akershus University College.

product (e.g. education); b) vertical - mergers between institutions that operate in similar academic fields but are oriented towards different types of products (e.g. a technical university and an engineering polytechnic; c) diversification - mergers between institutions that operate in different academic fields and are oriented towards similar types of products (e.g. a university college that offers education in economics and a university college that offers education in engineering; d) conglomerate - mergers between institutions that operate in different academic fields and are oriented towards different kinds of products (e.g. a comprehensive university and a polytechnic).

Although in some countries, e.g. in Norway, Australia, UK and Hungary, there are examples of all four types of mergers described above. It is called cross-sectoral mergers. In Norway, this type of merger between university and university colleges have been sort of a shortcut in order to achieve a university status for university colleges, i.e. in this case university colleges did not have to qualify for university status after NOKUT's standards and criteria (Skodvin, 2014).

While looking into mergers between HEIs it is also important to distinguish the actors who initiated them. One can differentiate between incidental (voluntary) mergers, and policy-induced (forced) mergers, as they are believed to differ in its nature, even though one might be the result of the other. In the incidental/voluntary merger the institutions have normally initiated the merger themselves. This type of mergers by their nature are much more idiosyncratic in terms of drivers. In merger literature they are believed to be more advantageous than disadvantageous, as they might resolve financial exigency and secure cost efficiency. While in a forced amalgamation, the merger initiator is normally an external actor to the institution (Skodvin, 2014; Goedegebuure 2012; Skodvin 1999). Skodvin (1999) claims that policy induced mergers are about maturing systems that need to be taken to the "next level". The new phenomenon of policy-induced mergers is that this tendency in HE is becoming a "world class", as it is largely connected to global university rankings, global competition for researchers and students and eventually, creation of elite universities.

The table below (Table 1), provides a list of most countries where the merger process has been initiated by the HE authorities and further regarded as a measure to restructure HE sector. Nonetheless, it is also important to mention that the government and corresponding authorities in different countries have introduced different rationales for implementing their reforms. Correspondingly, the degree of autonomy for the HEIs involved into a merger

process has also varied (Skodvin, 1999).

Table 1: An overview of forced and voluntary mergers in a few countries

Countries	Forced	Voluntary
Australia (1960s ‘the binary system’, 1987–90 ‘the unified system’)	X	
USA (1960–1997)	X	X
Canada (the reform of college education; the creation of Cegeps in the 1960s. The establishment of a new regional network university in the 1990s)	X	X
<i>Norway (the state college reform in 1994)</i>	X	
Sweden (the university and college reform in 1977, and the establishment of Mid-Sweden University in 1993)	X	X
The Netherlands (HBO reform 1983–87, and the new voluntary mergers from 1988)	X	X
Belgium (Flemish college reform 1994)	X	
Germany (Gesamthochschulen during the 1970s, Fachhochschulen during the 1980s)	X	X
Great Britain (the polytechnic reform during the 1960s and 1970s, and new voluntary mergers in 1980–1990s)	X	X
Finland (the polytechnic reform, (1991–1995)	X	

(Source: Skodvin 1999)

Harman & Harman (2008) support the idea that one of the main focus areas of the mergers is aimed at helping HEIs to deal more effectively with external environmental changes and opportunities. Overall, the result of the merger process is mainly an improvement in management, organization and administration of a HEI (Skodvin, 1999).

2.2.1 Mergers in Norwegian context: University College Reform

During the past decades, the Norwegian HE system has been going through a series of reform and restructuring efforts (Gornitzka et al., 2005). The aim of the reforms was first and foremost to enhance the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of HEIs (ibid). More precisely, mergers were seen as a key policy instrument to achieving quality in HE, therefore, they have been used in several of these reforms. For example, a major restructuring of the HE system took place in the first half of the 1990s, through the establishment of 26 larger state university colleges based on regional mergers of 98 colleges for economics and business administration, teacher and preschool teacher training, engineering, nursing, social work, and other professional programs (Kyvik, 2009). Behind any merger there are always the motives. The most significant and general intention with mergers sets the aim to create better academic institutions with respect to teaching and research (Skodvin, 2014). Furthermore, the driving

force by any merging institution is the primary intention to gain economic, academic and administrative benefits. The basic intention of the economic benefit is to be more cost efficient. The intention of the academic benefits is firstly, to eliminate duplicative study programs; secondly, to strengthen the link between research and teaching; thirdly, to promote the creating of new multi- and interdisciplinary fields, and lastly, to diversify academic profiles (Skodvin, 2014: 6).

Accordingly, Skodvin (1999) identified a number of drivers behind the many merger initiatives within Norwegian college sector, namely the main strategic reasons are as follows: a) ambitions to improve institution's position in the HE hierarchy; b) lifting institutional profile, i.e. national and international reputation; c) success in attracting students and funding; d) increased research profile; e) improvement of student diversity and offer more comprehensive courses; and lastly f) better utilize human and physical resources (ibid).

For some university colleges, striving for university status was also seen as a necessity for being able to hold on to research-focused academic staff, and to develop their academic profile (Kyvik and Stensaker, 2013), which is also relates to the case of HiOA.

Giving a snapshot of the merger processes that took place in Norway, one can conclude that they, to an extent, have been involuntarily as a result of a top-down (state-initiated) process. In fact, it was the result of government's direction or at least strong government's encouraging. This view is supported by Skodvin (2014) who argues that:

"... Norway should concentrate its academic, economic- and administrative resources into a larger and more competitive units though collaboration, alliances and mergers (CAM)" (ibid: 3)

Accordingly, there was a clear political statement to reduce the number of HEIs, however, at the same time the structure of HE should be governed by quality with both excellence and quality requirement (Skodvin, 2014). These mergers were enforced and initiated by the then Minister of Education Gudmund Hernes, with the aim to create larger and stronger academic units and better conditions for students, to improve the quality of administrative services, and to make the college system cost more efficient (Kyvik, 1999). In fact, the result of the mergers of the colleges was the establishment of a formal binary HE system, which had a clear distinction between university colleges (which didn't have a university status), and universities (specialized university institutions). However, today there is a tendency that some colleges, including the HiOA, through lobbying in the parliament and the government

started working their way towards achieving university status (Kyvik & Stensaker 2013).

The vast majority of university colleges in Norway have developed a relatively similar academic profiles, which consisted of a mix between health-related disciplines (nursing in particular), teacher training, engineering and undergraduate business administration studies (Kyvik 2009 in Kyvik, Stensaker 2013). As a result, in the Norwegian context, merger has become a driving force in a broader creation of a more multidisciplinary study programs.

To conclude, a merger of HEIs is normally a complex, time-consuming and difficult process that generally requires negotiations, resources and detailed planning of the whole process. In the Norwegian context, this applies to both the public institutions and Ministry of Education and Research (Skodvin, 2014). In the case of HiOA, the two boards of OUC and AUC took up a process with the aim of closer cooperation or full merger in 2008, and a phase of reports and discussions was lasting up to 2011 when the merger was completed.

2.2.2 Merger between OUC and AUC 2011: background and rationale

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Oslo University College (OUC) and Akershus University College (AUC) merged together on 1 August 2011. The initiative for the merger came from the top level, from the state and had several purposes behind it. Firstly, it was an extension of the Stjernø Committee setting a general request to the Ministry of Education that neighboring institutions should enter into closer cooperation and preferably amalgamate (Stjernø-utvalget 2008). Secondly, it was an expressed need for a greater degree of coordination of education and research in Oslo area. Furthermore, a considerable growth in the number of new student places at the two colleges was expected, and one large university college was considered to be a better basis for tackling growth and restructuring than two institutions in the same region. Thirdly, the leadership at the two colleges set a goal to establish a professional university, therefore, and a merger of the two institutions was considered a strategic move to achieve this goal (Lekve et al., 2014a; 2014b; Mathisen and Pinheiro 2015).

OUC and AUC prior to merger

Prior to the merger, OUC was Norway's largest college located in Oslo and offering the broadest portfolio of professional study programs available in the national context and

enrolling over 12000 students (DBH 2014). AUC was a mid-size regional institution outside the capital with about 3900 enrolments (ibid). Similarly to OUC, the majority of AUC's study programs and activities were based on vocational and professional education (see Table 2). As the requirement for professional development and high quality of education was increasing, the increasing level of competition among other HEIs, requirements for monitoring the Quality Reform and Bologna process, expectations from the region for active participation in regional and national development tasks set AUC with major challenges in the years ahead, i.e. maintaining and further developing practice-oriented education while working on research and professional development, etc. In order to respond to these challenges, merger was seen as a beneficial solution for both parties (as prior to the merger with AUC, OUC had an intention of achieving a university status was gradually working towards its goal) (Mathisen and Pinheiro 2015).

Table 2: Facts about OUC and AUC before merger

Oslo University College (OUC) Høgskolen i Oslo (HiO)		Akershus University College (AUC) Høgskolen i Akershus (HiAk)	
Organization:		Organization:	
7 Faculties:	Location:	4 Faculties:	Location (from 2003):
Faculty of Nursing	Oslo, Pilestredet str.	Faculty of Nursing Education	Kjeller (Akershus)
Faculty of Engineering	Oslo, Pilestredet str.	Faculty of Technical and Vocational Teacher Education	Kjeller (Akershus)
Faculty of Health Sciences	Oslo, Pilestredet str.	Faculty of Social Education	Kjeller (Akershus)
Faculty of Education and International Studies	Oslo, Pilestredet str.	Faculty of Product Design	Kjeller (Akershus)
Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science	Oslo, Pilestredet str.	*up to 2003 study location was based in Blaker, Lørenskog, Stabekk og i Sandvika	
Faculty of Art, Design and Drama	Oslo, Pilestredet str.		
Faculty of Business, Public Administration and Social Work	Oslo, Pilestredet str.	Key data:	
Centers: Centre for Educational Research and Development Centre for the Study of Professions National Centre for Multicultural Education Learning Centre		3 900 students (2011) 300 administrative staff (2011)	
Key data:			

12 400 students 1 250 administrative staff 36 bachelor programs 21 master programs 2 PhD programs History: OUC was established on August 1, 1994 as a result of the merger of 18 smaller colleges in the capital area: Aker sykepleierhøgskole Barnevernsakademiet i Oslo Bislet høghskolesenter Norges kommunal- og sosialhøgskole Norsk Journalisthøgskole Oslo ingeniørhøgskole Statens bibliotek- og informasjonshøgskole Statens lærerhøgskole i forming Statens reseptarhøgskole Statens sykepleierhøgskole Ullevål sykepleierhøgskole Statens yrkespedagogiske høgskole Østlandets musikkonservatorium Up to 2011 OUC was the 4 th largest public university of HE in Norway.	14 bachelor programs 6 master programs 1 PhD program History: AUC was established on August 1, 1994 as a merger of 5 university colleges in Oslo area as a part of Norwegian university college reform in 1994 ⁹
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(Source: DBH; www.hio-hiok.no)

The merged university college set a focus on becoming a national leading professional university, regionally anchored with the clear metropolitan profile and international orientation. As a result, on August 1, 2011 the merger decision was accomplished. Together, HiOA became Norway's largest state university college for professional studies. Following the merger, HiOA is organized within 4 faculties, 21 departments, faculty boards and consultative bodies (see table 3). Its campuses located at Pilestredet (downtown Oslo) and at Kjeller (rural surroundings near Lillestrøm, northeast of Oslo). The campus at Kjeller, formerly the main campus of AUC, still operates as well as all the other buildings at Pilestredet campus. Most of the activities at HiOA as to research, education and administrative work are located at Pilestredet in addition to the central administration and rectorate. HiOA offers additional teaching programs in Sandvika knowledge center, area outside of Oslo. This was part of HiOA's strategy to become the college for the entire Oslo and Akershus area through the development of education in the west region of the country.

⁹ Norwegian University college reform (1994) - a reform in Norwegian higher education system when 98 smaller colleges were merged together into 26 larger university colleges starting from 1 August 1994.

Table 3: Facts about HiOA

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus	
Organisation:	
4 Faculties, 21 departments	Location
Faculty of Health Sciences	Kjeller (Akershus), Pilestredet (Oslo), Sandvika (Akershus)
Faculty of International and Educational Studies	Kjeller (Akershus), Pilestredet (Oslo), Sandvika (Akershus)
Faculty of Social Sciences	Pilestredet (Oslo)
Faculty of Technology, Art and Design	Pilestredet (Oslo), Kjeller (Akershus)
Centers: Centre for the Study of Professions Centre for Welfare and Labour Research National Centre for Multicultural Education Key data: 17 465 students (2014) 1900 administrative staff (2014) Over 50 bachelor programmes Over 30 master programmes 6 PhD programmes A wide variety of six-month and one-year programs Lifelong learning by providing continuing and further education in different areas History: HiOA was established on August 1, 2011 as a result of merger of Oslo University College and Akershus University College. As of today (2015), HiOA is one of the largest state university colleges that offer the broadest portfolio of professional studies available in Norway.	

(Source: NSD)

As it was mentioned by the rectors of the two former colleges, Sissel Østberg (OUC) and Jan Grund (AUC), the merger became a driving force as the region acquired better-coordinated services within professionally oriented education and research (hio-hiak, 2009). The decision to amalgamate was approved in the meeting as of December 9th 2010. Normally, merging denotes a radical change, where a lot of factors have an influence including an aspiration of an institution that was used by the opponents and proponents, as a result, there was an argument to support the merger and arguments against the merger (Kyvik and Stensaker 2013).

The board of OUC made the decision with 10 against one vote, while the decision of AUC was unanimous. Those who encouraged the merger idea gave regional and academic arguments providing support of it. The major point of view was that the merger gives an opportunity to develop the idea of a new type of university and to further develop a new

infrastructure. However, more internal opposition came from staff at OUC, who considered the university college to be big enough to function as an autonomous institution on its own. There was an idea that AUC is not strong enough HEI when it comes to research activities. There was also formed an opposing opinion that the merger might take time from academic work, that having two campuses is a disadvantage regarding the importance of geographical proximity, a merger in itself is very costly and demands a lot of resources, and finally that bachelor programs may suffer as a result.

As a result of the mentioned above argumentations, OUC stated its needs for more time to conduct more investigations, and it took a decision to create a small working group which would provide an advice to the leadership of the institution how it should position itself with respect to the 2003 Quality Reform and opening up a decision to become a university. Eventually, the boards of OUC and AUC sent the application for merger to the Ministry of Education on December 17th 2010.

2.3 Internationalization in Higher Education

The concept of internationalization is not new; essentially it has been used for a number of decades in governmental agenda and in political science (Knight 2013). However, in the area of HE it predominantly came into play since the early 1980's (Knight, 2013; Trondal et al. 2001). The concept of internationalization lacks the generally agreed definitions in the literature (Knight and de Wit, 1995), therefore, there is a chance that it might cause some inaccuracy or even confusion in the policy dialogs.

Given the current high profile debate with regard to internationalization of HE, it is often conceptualized by describing different types of international activities and cooperation conducted by HEIs. Depending on the context of the study, a number of authors (Knight and de Wit, 1995; Frølich 2005; 2006; Gornitzka 2008) elucidate that internationalization of HE can be introduced, rationalized and operationalized as:

- International research collaboration (e.g. international academic network, international research community);
- The student and the educational dimension of internationalization (e.g. student/staff mobility);

- National policy reforms (e.g. Quality Reform – internationalization as a tool to improve quality of education);
- Solidarity (internationalization as a tool in engaging in global solidarity - cooperating with countries in the South);
- Border-crossing relations (describes transformations on different analytical levels) (ibid).

Over the past decades, the Norwegian HE sector has been undergoing a relatively comprehensive and extensive reform, where a great number of the structural changes were linked to international processes (Knight and de Wit, 1995; Frølich 2005; 2006; Gornitzka 2008). Since the 1960s, internationalization came into play as an external dimension of Norwegian HE sector (Nyborg 2007). Higher education abroad was perceived as a supplement to Norwegian HE, as well as the policy objective was aimed to increase the capacity of the national system up to the point this would no longer be needed. Thus, Norwegian students have actively been encouraged to be mobile and take their education abroad. Nyborg (2007) mentions that on one occasion Minister Hernes told students: “Do your country a favor – leave!” (ibid: 2). At that point, study abroad was an intentional governmental aim to compensate for the lack of capacity in the national system. During the 1980s the rationale behind sending students abroad has changed and became one of internationalization, recognizing that the Norwegian labor market would benefit from graduates with an international experience and that for Norwegian students to attend high quality institutions abroad had a value in itself rather than just ease the pressure on the national system (Maassen et al., 2005).

Further in 2000, the Mjøs Commission¹⁰ came out with its report on HE “Freedom with Responsibility” [Frihet med ansvar] (NOU 2000: 14), where the significance of higher education for society was highlighted, and some suggestions about improving the quality of study were also given (Skodvin & Aamodt, 2001: 8). The Mjøs Commission shed light on the need for change and for the stronger university leadership; moreover, it focused on giving more autonomy for institutional administration and providing better tools to respond to the

¹⁰ Ole Mjøs – professor, former rector of the University of Tromsø and former president of the Norwegian Council of Universities.

changing environment (Nyborg, 2007).

Later, in June 2001, the White Paper “Do your duty – demand your rights” (KUF, 2001) followed the Mjøs Commission's report. The White Paper put more emphasis on the major aspects of HEIs, national agencies in HE and the student body. Most important, the White Paper very clearly underlined the importance of quality. According to Nyborg (2007), the White Paper also stated that the organizational form of HE at that time did not provide universities and colleges with the sufficient freedom and responsibility to achieve the overall national objectives (ibid: 3). HEIs were expected to deal with the number of tasks, which were of a high importance for Norway's culture, well-being, democracy, economy and environment. Apart from that, HEIs were required to contribute to education and research in both public and private sector at the same time. Thereby, national HE policies with a combination of the European Bologna Process came together into the Quality Reform. Correspondingly, the theme of internationalization has been a topic of vital importance in both the European initiated Bologna process and the Norwegian Quality Reform (Gornitzka 2008).

High-quality education and greater opportunities for student mobility have been expressed through the Norwegian Quality Reform, which can be seen as the Norwegian implementation of the Bologna Process. The Bologna Declaration included objectives of an adoption of a new system based on two cycles with easily readable and comparable bachelor and master degrees, the transition to the ECTS credits model (European Credit Transfer System), transition opportunities between the countries (Bologna Declaration 1999). In addition, an important part of the reform was the vision of development of one European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010, with the aim to promote student and staff mobility, quality assurance and institutional cooperation. The creation of NOKUT and the encouragement a better quality at HEIs were also in accordance with the priority areas of the Bologna process. In addition, it intends to better opportunities for students.

Given some facts outlined in the previous paragraph, it is quite predictable that the two significant documents, namely “Freedom with Responsibility” (2000) and “Do your duty – demand your rights” (2001), created the foundation for the reform in Norwegian higher education, which has been named “The Quality Reform”. It is also important to note that both papers dealt specifically with the concept of internationalization. At that point of time, most

HEIs have seen internationalization only as a matter of course, i.e. they did not deal with it strategically and the concept of internationalization was rather underestimated on the institutional agenda (Maassen et al., 2004). However, when at the start of 2003 the Quality Reform came into effect, the issue of internationalization was for the first time brought up to the forefront of the national HE policy agenda. It was focusing upon the international dimension of research, teaching and learning (Maassen et al., 2004). The essential intention of the reform is to set a general national standard for internationalization.

Ahola et al. (2014) pointed out the main objectives of the Quality Reform:

- to achieve a higher degree of efficiency through devolution of authority to the HEIs;
- the provision of stronger leadership;
- increased emphasis on internationalization;
- the formation of an autonomous central institution for quality assurance and accreditation and the development of criteria for institutional audit;
- new pedagogical designs as well as a new funding model that is supposed to provide stronger incentives for improvement (ibid: 64).

First and foremost, one of the main focus areas of the Quality Reform has been student mobility. The Quality Reform has also introduced a degree structure, grading system and quality assurance system in line with the Bologna Process. As of 2003 a new degree structure 3 year bachelor degree + 2 year master's + 3 year doctorate (PhD) was introduced. Accordingly, the singular grading scale (from “A” to “F”) was adapted to the ECTS¹¹ standard with 60 credit points, which were equal to a full time workload for one academic year. In this way, the structural reform in Norwegian HE and the introduction of the quality assurance system were both directly linked to the general requirements of the Bologna Process (Maassen et al., 2004).

With the further evaluation of The Quality Reform it has been concluded that the given reform significantly changed the general attitude to the concept of internationalization.

¹¹ ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) - is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students in HE across the European Union and other collaborating European countries.

Hence, the focus on internationalization has fundamentally increased. Halvorsen and Faye (2006) outlined that the Quality Reform shed more light on internationalization as a specific tool for quality improvement, as well as for a rather manifold HE segment with the target on institutional areas of international strength; however, student mobility was still the prevailing element. Having considered internationalization as an aim itself, here focus on student mobility might be seen as one of the results of the policy instruments that were introduced for the process of internationalization.

2.3.1 Internationalization of Norwegian Higher Education sector

In the Norwegian context, the overall idea of internationalization is mainly highlighted in the government's report and in its posterior white paper within the frame of the Quality Reform. The concept of internationalization in itself has become the central topic in Norwegian higher education and today it is perceived as an entire part of national HE policy (Maassen et al., 2004). According to the White Paper No. 14 to Stortinget (2008-2009), the definition of internationalization in the Norwegian context has been adopted in line with the international usage of the term:

“The process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”.
(Knight, 2003 in Report No. 14 (2008–2009) to the Storting: 9).

Nevertheless, from the definition above it can be seen, that internationalization of higher education is presented in a rather neutral, generic way; moreover, it leaves open the question of what exactly is meant by “an international, intercultural and/or global dimension”. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, internationalization of higher education as activity in the present study will be operationalized as:

“Internationalisation viewed as an organizational adaptation, requires its articulation by the leadership while simultaneously institutionalizing a strategic planning process that is representative and participative in that it recognizes and utilizes the power of the culture within which it occurs”

(Bartell, 2003: 43)

“...student and staff mobility to and from institutions abroad, number and kinds of formal agreements of cooperation and exchange with institutions abroad, formalized

international cooperation on research- and development projects, and use of English – as teaching language, in syllabus, and in scientific production”.

(Tjomsland, 2004: 14).

These definitions of the term point out that in practice, internationalization is carried out at all levels in different types of HEIs as the whole range of process by which HE becomes less national and more internationally oriented.

In the report that was presented from the Norwegian government to the Storting (the Parliament), internationalization of education in Norway is seen from an overall perspective, which includes all levels of education. In line with the White Paper on internationalization of HE in Norway (Report No. 14 (2008–2009)), it sheds more light on the core principles and priorities of the established framework for further development, where internationalization of education should:

- a) add more relevance in terms of the needs of working life and society through developing courses and programs;
- b) lay the foundation for the ability to meet the challenges and opportunities that arise from globalization and increased international interaction;
- c) contribute to improving quality so that the educational programs and institutions become more attractive and competitive, both nationally and internationally;
- d) provide better language skills and a better understanding of and insight into other cultures.

For central political authorities, the internationalization of higher education sector in Norway is increasingly perceived as a strategy for quality enhancement. Thus, a number of international students in Norway became three times higher since 2000, and it was estimated at around 20,000 in 2015 (DBH, 2015).

As the Quality Reform emphasized that internationalization should be a part of an overall strategy at the universities and university colleges, the concept “internationalization at home” has also become increasingly important focus area in Norwegian HEIs (Report No. 14 (2008–2009: 13)). Attracting foreign researchers and teaching staff, establishing courses and degree

programs taught in English and increasing internationalization in the local HEIs are some of the activities related to internationalization at home. In order to follow the goals of the Bologna declaration, Norway has also invested a significant amount of effort, time and money to make ensure that all students have the opportunity to gain the international experience from studying abroad (Kehm, Michelsen & Vabø, 2010 in Ahola et al., 2014).

Given the principles of the Norwegian national HE internationalization policy outlined in the previous paragraph, it is quite predictable that all the external actors and external organizations, namely The Bologna Process and the Quality Reform have a great impact on the national policies and on the organizational goals of internationalization policies of HEIs in Norway. In other words, the Bologna Process and the Quality Reform are perceived as the main environmental influences¹². Therefore, internationalization policies might be interpreted as responses to environmental and external changes, even though they are also justified on academic grounds (Frølich, 2005: 33). Nevertheless, the rationales for internationalization policies essentially do not depend on these external actors (Frølich 2005). In order to fulfill national political objectives in Norway, development cooperation with the European Union has become strongly influential in the national policy-making and legislative amendments (MER 2011b).

2.3.2 Institutionalizing Internationalization: NOKUT and SIU

With respect to the Norwegian higher education sector, the implementation of the Quality Reform also intended the establishment of two significant institutions: 1) a quality assurance agency, namely the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)¹³ and, 2) a center for internationalization, The Centre for International University Cooperation (SIU)¹⁴.

¹² Education programs guided by the EU have also become a significant tool to enhance internationalization. Given the fact that Norway is not a member of the EU, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research has defined the EU as the most significant partner within the area of higher education and research (MER 2011a).

¹³ NOKUT: Nasjonalt Organ for Kvalitet i Utdanningen

¹⁴ SIU: Senter for Internasjonalisering av Utdanning

In 2003 the Norwegian government established an autonomous central institution, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). It is the controlling authority for educational activities at all Norwegian universities, university colleges and institutions with single accredited HE programs (nokut.no 2014)¹⁵. It is important to note that NOKUT is an independent governmental organization, which cannot be instructed by the Ministry of Education other than by Law, and it has significantly more authority than its predecessor - The Network Norway Council (Maassen et al., 2014).

First and foremost, the purpose of NOKUT is to supervise and help to develop the quality assurance of Norwegian HE through the process of evaluation, accreditation and recognition of quality systems. At the same time, they provide the general recognition of foreign HE and a number of regulated professions, which require recognition in the form of authorization through individual applications (Maassen et al., 2004). In 2004 NOKUT set a requirement for all Norwegian HEIs to develop their own quality assurance system and be responsible for its all aspects.

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) was established in 2004 as a Norwegian public sector agency, whose main objective was to promote the participation of Norwegian HEIs and research institutions in international cooperation. The agency was assigned to promote internationalization, intercultural dialogue, developing cooperation and student mobility (MER, 2011b). SIU is an important key player in the internationalization of Norwegian HE and in the establishment of international offices within the individual institutions (Michelsen and Aamodt, 2007: 55).

¹⁵ nokut.no <http://www.nokut.no/en/Universities-and-university-colleges/>

3 Analytical Framework

Following the introduction and the background information, this chapter sketches the theoretical foundations and further presents a set of propositions to be empirically reflected upon. The first section provides a discussion of the selection of the underlying theories on the organizational change: resource dependence and institutional theory. Further, the brief description, the basic concepts and assumptions of both theories are presented. The advantages of the combined use of the two theories are analyzed. Then, the various elements having impact on the organizational change are explored; and finally, the analytical framework for the thesis is presented. To study the process of the organizational development of internationalization as a strategic policy area in HiOA, I first describe the two main theoretical perspectives on organizations separately: resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Pfeffer, 1982) and institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Selznick, 1984; Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Scott, 1995). Then, using Oliver's (1991) work, I shed light on the main convergent and divergent foci of the two perspectives. Further, using Oliver's (1991) typology of the environmental pressure will provide us the basis for explaining the organizational development that took place within HiOA with respect to internationalization. Additional theoretical building blocks will also be discussed. In the end, the analytical framework for the thesis is presented. Within this chapter, each theory is explained and applied to the analytical framework.

3.1 Exploring underlying theories on organizations and organizational change

The analytical framework integrates the two main theoretical approaches that explain organizational change. The framework provides us with analytical terms that can be used to understand the relationship between policies and state, external and internal factors influencing the processes of organizational change within an institution. After examining the array of different theoretical perspectives provided, the theoretical literature on HE shows consensus that an organization does not and cannot exist in a vacuum (Gornitzka, 1999: 7) on the contrary, it has to actively interact with its environment in order to achieve its main goals and objectives. At the same time, the environment is dynamic yet not unified entity, as it

consists of all the other organizations with which an institution interplays (Goedegebuure & Meek, 1999: 132). Thus, organizations to a certain extent appear to be dependent on their environment for resources, material, funding, personnel, social legitimacy, etc. (Gornitzka 1999).

3.1.1 Resource Dependency

Resource dependence perspective on organizational action and change

Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; Pfeffer 1982) first and foremost focuses on the adaptive behavior of organizations and puts forward the fundamental assumption that organizations are influenced by external conditions, but they are flexible and seek to adapt to their environments. Second, this perspective rests on the assumption that all organizational actions are primarily aimed at securing institutional survival. Not taking into account other goals and aims, survival is the fundamental objective of any institution (Goedegebuure & Meek, 1999). The key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The two basic ones in a resource-dependence approach to organizations are considered to be funding (Goedegebuure & Meek, 1999) and legitimacy (Scott, 2001). Translating into HE context and applying to this study, the parallels can be drawn. When it comes to money, financial resources are to a certain extent linked to student enrolment, which determines institutional budget and is a significant indicator for the financial constituent of HEIs. In this way, institution's reputation, international prestige, the recruitment of international students and internationalization itself might also refer to the resources that are linked to internationalization and that institution is dependent on them. Failure to acquire these resources will eventually result in the demise of the organization's subsistence, since organizations could not survive if they are not responsive to the demands from their environments (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Goedegebuure & Meek, 1999; Gornitzka, 1999; Skodvin, 1997).

The resource dependency theoretical perspective originates from a basic idea: if one seeks to understand an organization, one must understand how an organization relates to the other social actors and stakeholders in its environment (Gornitzka, 1999). Given that organizations are not able to generate all the resources they require, they are dependent on their environment for resources (Pfeffer, 1982: 192; Powers 2000: 6). Thus, theory claims that organizations are externally influenced to satisfy the demands of those in its environment that provide essential resources for its persistent survival (Pfeffer, 1982). The theory argues that

an organization to its full extent is shaped and constrained by its environment, while at the same time an organization alters the environment it is established in (Pfeffer, 1982). According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978: 39) “the underlying premise of the external perspective on organizations, is that organizational activities and outcomes are accounted for by the context in which the organization is embedded”. This means that organizations seek to execute stable relations with their environments with the aim to augment stability, continuity and availability of resources. Goedegebuure & Meek (1999: 133) support the notion that the more organization becomes dependent on its environment, the more uncertainty is promoted at the expense of stability.

Two main elements are of importance when it comes to the resource dependence argument: a) the development of inter-organizational power, and its influence on the activities of organizations; b) the organizational leadership (managers and administrators) endeavor to control their dependencies, in order to ensure survival of the organization, and to acquire more autonomy and freedom to external constraints (Pfeffer, 1982: 193). Organizations face both the problems of using resources and the problems acquiring them. As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) outlined:

“[...] acquiring resources means the organization must interact with others who control those resources. In that sense, organizations depend on their environments” (ibid: 258)

and, therefore:

“[...] what happens in an organization is not only a function of the organization, its structure, its leadership, its procedures, or its goals. What happens is also a consequence of the environment and the particular contingencies and constraints deriving from that environment” (ibid: 3).

Resource dependence perspective on mergers in higher education

Following the resource dependency perspective, it can be argued that HEIs will merge if a change in environmental circumstances requires them to do so. In that case mergers are seen as a necessary condition to ensure a sufficient and continuous supply of critical resources. As a merger implies a certain loss of autonomy, it is a process an institution would prefer to elude. Therefore, certain changes that take place in the institutional environment will influence the flow of the resources before an institution will contemplate the merger (Skodvin

and Stensby, 2010). There is ample support for the claim that there is no organization that can generate the necessary resources for survival completely on its own. It is believed that to create a dependency relationship organizations are compelled to interact with other organizations controlling these resources in order to create a dependency relationship (Goedegebuure & Meek, 1999). In other words, dependency is not a one-way process (Blau 1964; Emerson 1962; Scharpf 1978, reviewed in Goedegebuure & Meek 1999). Mergers of institutions lead to concentration, concentration leads to increases of power of the merged institutions, and therefore, to a change in the initial division of inter-organizational power, which in its turn implies a change in the environmental conditions within which the other institutions have to operate (Goedegebuure & Meek, 1999: 136).

Goedegebuure (1992) applied resource dependency perspective to study merging activities in the college sector in Australia and the Netherlands, where the initiative to amalgamate two small institutions into larger ones came from the state as a direct result of governmental policies, where the governments pushed certain incentives to guide the merging process, that is, increasing institutional size would trigger increased funding (Goedegebuure 1992: 3-6, reviewed in Gornitzka et al., 2005). The study also argues that the merging activity depended on other environmental factors and that the extent to which the given institution engaged in a merger depended on the “overall environmental situation as perceived by institutions” (Goedegebuure 1992: 226). The proposed theory proved to be a productive scheme for analyzing and understanding the institutional behavior that took place after the policy initiatives in the two countries, accounting for the role of the environment in producing organizational change as well as focusing on the organizational capacity to influence environmental conditions under which they had to operate (Goedegebuure 1992).

From the above reasoning, the development in the environment of HEIs is rapidly changing. More and more, HEIs face a number of external and social pressures (i.e. governmental legislation and regulations, rules and procedures, formal pressures from other organizations, normative standards, etc.) to manipulate the environment in order to attract more resources and/or to become more legitimate (Huisman&Meek, 1999).

In theory, resources follow legitimacy by having a strong internationalization focus that is a far-reaching topic which all universities today striving for. Most European universities normally have strong internationalization strategies and focus, so translating this into our

theoretical context this might be a way they attempt to access resources. In the case of HiOA and in the light of our research questions, such dimensions as a) funding, b) reputation ((inter)national prestige), and c) recruitment of international students – could be identified as critical resources when it comes to organizing internationalization policy area within the university college, as HiOA is trying to become more legitimate to acquire more resources. In terms of this study, it can be argued that internationalization can also be conceptualized as a critical resource that HiOA puts into practice to acquire legitimacy in order to achieve a university status. So how do they do it?

Given the fact that internationalization might cause some changes within the institution where it is being actively implemented and promoted, HEIs are attempting to change or reorganize both how they organize, govern and fund services, activities and practices around internationalization and the way they think about internationalization as a universal tool used to meet the demands/pressures from the environment in order to adapt it to new realities. Indirectly, this is also changing the environment itself. The idea of legitimacy being a resource has always been part of the resource dependence, however, institutionalism took up this theoretical perspective further. Essentially, resource dependence in a way turned into institutionalism.

3.1.2 Institutional theory

From an institutional perspective, organizations operate in an environment dominated by the social framework of rules, norms, values, requirements, understandings and taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitutes appropriate or acceptable organizational forms and behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott 1987; Oliver 1997; Gornitzka 1999; Scott 2001). The institutional model of organizations sheds light on different types of legitimacy an organization can attain; furthermore, it explains why some organizations take the form they do and why they are considered legitimate institutions (Powers, 2000).

Legitimacy and the three pillars

Legitimacy is the core concept in institutional theory perspective (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Suchman (1995: 574) defines legitimacy as:

"[...] a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions".

Scott (2001) develops three analytical elements of legitimacy for organizations: regulative, normative and cognitive. The regulative pillar implicates rules, laws and sanctions, i.e. "what the law says is the right way". The normative pillar involves social obligation, norms and values i.e. "what society says is the right way". The cognitive pillar engages symbols, beliefs and social identities i.e. "this is the right way because there simply is no other way". According to Scott (2001), institutions obtain their legitimacy based on these three pillars. Regulative legitimacy comes through rule setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities. It can be gained through doing things like other HEIs, such as offering financial aid to the students and requiring a certain number of semesters of foreign language study. Normative legitimacy is developed through complying with internalized morals and introducing a prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimension into social life. The normative process is, for example, the government's idea to make internationalization a strategy area. Cognitive legitimacy underscores the core of cultural-cognitive elements of institutions and evolves from doing things the way they have always been done (Powers 2000: 2; Scott 2001: 52).

In addition, there are certain beliefs and values that embody how a new organization should be restructured and organized. These values are coming up as certain driving forces for organizations rather than a consciously rational choice. One of the distinctive features of the institutional theory stresses the taken-for-grantedness of an organizational action and highlights the significance of cultural elements in the organizational process (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Legitimacy and Isomorphism

Because organizations seek legitimacy, they tend to be homogeneous. With this regard, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) capture the process of homogenization as isomorphism and classify it into three types: coercive, mimetic and normative.

Coercive isomorphism originates from political influence and the problem of legitimacy (the government said so). It occurs because of regulations, such as the Norwegian Quality Reform (2003) requirements - a direct initiative from the government.

Mimetic isomorphism is when organizations pattern after other organizations when there is uncertainty about which course of action to follow, when organizational technologies are poorly understood (March & Olsen 1976, in DiMaggio & Powell 1983:151), when goals are ambiguous or when environment creates symbolic uncertainty (DiMaggio & Powell 1983:151) (it worked for them so it might also work for us). Mimetic isomorphism occurs when HEIs copy or mirror each other, such as by high profiling of internationalization policies within the institution.

Lastly, normative isomorphism - associates with professionalization - ensues when organizational leadership interacts professionally (we all do it this way). It comes about from the same people moving from institution to institution, or for instance, when all the strategic policy areas within the institution are being conducted the same way as it was performed in the previous institutions before the merger for example, as the administrative workers bring the same organizational and governing styles/skills with them to the new organization. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) also outline that more than one of the above mentioned processes might occur at the same time.

3.1.3 The combined approach of the two perspectives

The analytical framework applied to this thesis is built upon two major theoretical perspectives on organizational change: resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Pfeffer 1982) and institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1991). Resource dependency theory focuses on the adaptive, flexible abilities of organizations influenced by external conditions, thus they seek to adapt their behavior to the observed changes in their environments. Contrastingly, the institutional theory underlines the taken-for-granted norms of organizational action and the significance of cultural aspects in the organizational process (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Yet both perspectives emphasize the significance of obtaining stability and legitimacy for the purpose of demonstrating social importance and mobilizing resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Oliver, 1991), even though resource dependency theory focuses more on the instrumentality of legitimacy for the latter purpose (Pfeffer 1981, reviewed in Oliver 1991).

The two perspectives converge in a number of assumptions. First, they share the basic idea that organizational behavior is compelled by multiple external pressures, and that

organizations can only survive when they are responsive to those external pressures and demands (Maassen and Gornitzka, 1999). In addition, both perspectives are premised on the assumptions that a) organizational environments are collective and interconnected; b) organizations seek legitimacy, stability and predictability; and that c) organizations are interest driven (Oliver, 1991).

During the last decades the most interesting approach to this issue has been proposed by the number of authors (Oliver 1991; Gornitzka 1999; Huisman & Meek 1999) who argued that the best approach to investigate organizational behavior integrates both perspectives. They have tried to combine these two theories and have discussed the way in which HEIs handled and responded to the environmental pressures, i.e. governmental rules and procedures, formal pressures from organizations, normative standards, etc.

Gornitzka (1999), Huisman and Meek (1999), Scott (2001) and Reale and Seeber (2011) focused on integrating the views of the two approaches for studying organizational change in the HE sector empirically by applying Oliver's (1991) model. By highlighting the convergent aspects of the two theories, Oliver's framework, first and foremost, rests on the assumption that organizations are affected by their institutional structure, however, they are capable to make strategic choices to the extent to which they try to manipulate their environment (Oliver, 1991). Along similar lines, Oliver (1991) argues:

"[...] given resource dependency theory's focus on the methods and benefits of noncompliance in response to external demands, this theory provides a particularly appropriate basis of comparison for revealing institutional theory's delimiting assumptions and for identifying the full repertoire of alternative strategies available to organizations" (Oliver, 1991: 173).

Huisman & Meek (1999) applied Oliver's typology of strategic responses to analyze the behavior of HEIs with respect to curricular innovations in two Dutch universities. They indicate that both institutional and external environment of HEIs to a certain extent are created by the government. This environment in its turn allows HEIs to apply a broad spectrum of strategies and tactics.

Scott (2001) has reviewed and worked up Oliver's typology of organizational strategies on the basis of intensification of her arguments. Referring to Oliver's (1991) typology, Scott argues that the environment of institutions shapes organizational strategies:

“...institutional environments influence and delimit what strategies organizations can employ” (Scott 2001: 171).

Reale and Seeber (2011) criticized the combination of two theoretical perspectives proposed by Oliver (1991) after facing some issues applying it to intensely heterogeneous HEIs and to the circumstances of less well-defined environmental pressures (i.e. budget cuts). In turn, based on Oliver’s model they developed a new one in order to interpret and predict organizational response to institutional pressures. Nevertheless, the presented findings outline that the combined approach is generally applicable for explaining organizational changes within HEIs.

Gornitzka (1999) goes further to explicate the way governmental policies become a driving force for change in HEIs. The internal process considered being of central importance to explain why and how HEIs go through the change process and why policies fail or succeed. By integration of the two theoretical perspectives, she presents a conceptual framework for studying the way organizations change in response to governmental policies.

In terms of this case study, by applying a combined approach of the two underlying theoretical perspectives to investigate how a merged institution organizes internationalization strategic policy area in regards to the development in its environment and responds to it, this thesis can provide a better understanding of how internationalization policy area is interpreted and organized within a merged institution. Further, it will help to answer the question to which extent merger process effected the integration of both university colleges’ strengths regarding the internationalization dimension.

Each of the demonstrated above theoretical perspectives make an important contribution to understanding the development process of internationalization within HiOA and investigate how it handles the developments in the environment and how it responds to it. For this purpose, Oliver’s (1991) typology of organizational responses will also be employed to examine the assumption discussed in chapter 1 (section 1.1).

In terms of analyzing organizational context of internationalization as a strategic area, it might be argued that the way internationalization is organized within HiOA relates to the merger as well as to the developments in its institutional environment. The institutional

environment implies pressures, demands, expectations, incentives, and requirements commencing in various levels of the external environment.

3.2 Characterizing internationalization as a strategic policy area

First, I will give an overview of how internationalization as a policy area will be characterized as proposed by Oliver (1991). This will function as the framework for investigating the university college's responses to the environment refining. Second, by using Oliver's framework I will outline the dimensions along which strategic behavior will be characterized. Third, I will describe the indicators that will be used to identify organizational change within HiOA, thus emphasizing the areas that are most likely to provide insight into strategic behavior.

As a point of departure, it is important to illuminate which definition of policy is being used for the characterization. Maassen and Gornitzka (1999) put forward the definition of policy as

"... a public statement of an objective and the kind of instruments that will be used to achieve it" (ibid: 304).

A public statement is built on a decision in an elected assembly at the national level and has to be approved by the parliament. A public statement within the institution is considered to be based on a decision in the Committee for Internationalization at the institutional level and have the approval of the institutional leadership. Hence, internationalization policy as an object of legislative choice (i.e. Bologna Process, the Quality Reform, the White Paper No. 14 (2008-2009) to the Storting), can be defined as a policy instrument that HiOA employs to achieve an overall policy objective of enhancing quality of education and research at HiOA, achieving university status, raising standards, increasing competitiveness nationally and internationally. Policy instruments are likely to give input into organizational change processes at the institutional level (Maassen & Gornitzka, 1999).

According to Oliver (1991), organizational strategic response to the environmental pressure

depends on the following five characteristics:

- 1) Why is the organization being pressured to conform to institutional set of rules or expectations? (CAUSE)
- 2) Who is exerting institutional pressure on the organizations? (CONSTITUENTS)
- 3) To what norms or requirements is the organization being pressured to conform? (CONTENT)
- 4) How or by what means are the pressures being exerted? (CONTROL)
- 5) What is the environmental context within which institutional pressures are being exerted? (CONTEXT) (ibid: 160)

For the analysis of the internationalization policy and the way it has been interpreted within the university college, Oliver's (1991) model will be directly applicable in characterizing it. In doing so, this framework will provide us the basis for explaining the organizational development that took place within HiOA with respect to internationalization. In what follows, the demonstrated above dimensions are further elaborated:

Cause

The cause of institutional pressures refers to rationale, set of expectations, or intended objectives that underlie external pressures for conformity. The reasons for institutional pressures come into two categories: social and economic fitness. When some pressures are developed to make organizations more socially fit or acceptable, other institutional pressures pursue the objectives of economic accountability and rationalization. Strategic behavior within the university college will depend on the extent to which an organization agrees to the objectives of the external pressures. Reasoning from this case study, it is interesting to examine whether internationalization aims at increasing economic performance of HEIs or if it is likely to aim at enhancing its legitimacy, for example by increasing their social relevance (ex. HiOA's achieving university status), or both. The cause behind the internationalization as a strategic policy area will be identified by examining its formulated objectives within the university college, specifically, when it comes to the social and /or economic fitness of HEIs.

Constituents

Under the institutional constituents one can perceive the state, interest groups, stakeholders, professions and the general public. These constituents impose a variety of laws, regulations and expectations on the organization. Generally, organizations are likely to face a number of different, conflict demands from various constituents. However, organizations may also dismiss or defy the demands from one of the constituents so that to meet the demands of another. This aspect will be examined by determining the constituents behind the internationalization policy within the college and to what extent their demands diverge. Those constituents could be the Norwegian government/ the Ministry of Education and Research, the SIU, the working group for internationalization as well as other stakeholders (including academics, students and industry representatives) or special interest organizations attracted to change HEIs to their own benefit.

Content

Two elements of the environmental pressure itself are particularly important for predicting the adoption of alternative strategies. On one hand, we seek to investigate whether the content is consistent with the goals and aims of the organization. In contrast, another impacting element is whether the environmental pressure causes a loss of decision-making differentiation. Consequently, this aspect will be explored by determining the degree to which the involvement of internationalization is coherent with the internal goals of the university college, and whether organizational structure of the institution has been influenced and affected by the changes (merger).

Control

Institutional control describes the means by which the environmental pressure is being imposed on the organization. There are two means by which the pressure is being exerted: by authority and legal coercion or by debating for voluntary compliance. This facet will be examined by pinpointing whether internationalization as a strategic policy area is organized through voluntary diffusion of institutional norms, values or practices or rather through legal coercion behind institutional norms and requirements.

Context

The environmental context is essential for determining the organization response to a certain pressure. Environmental uncertainty is the considerable component of the context that has an impact on organizations' conformity or resistance to institutional demands and expectations. More precisely, under the environmental uncertainty implied the condition when the future actions of the environment cannot be anticipated or scrupulously predicted. In the context of uncertainty, organizations are probable to be prone to mimic the other ones. This extent will therefore be explored by distinguishing the degree of uncertainty of the institutional environment of the university college. The uncertainties emerging from continuously transforming developments in the "knowledge-based society", as similarly to the changing frameworks in the HE field that may have compelling impact on the institution's ability to prognosticate the future conditions of its environment.

3.3 Predicting institution's strategic behavior

By combining institutional and resource dependency theories, Oliver (1991) presents an overarching framework of the strategic behavior which organization may enact in order to respond to the environmental pressure, with the purpose to comply with the institutional environment. Accordingly, she suggests five strategies for dealing with environmental pressures organizations may employ: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance and manipulation (Oliver, 1991: 152). I seek to understand whether, and how the organizational development with respect to internationalization took place after the merger was formalized can be classified in terms of responses outlined by Oliver (1991).

During further analysis, this section will help to identify which of these five strategic responses, if any, are the "ones" HiOA is following with respect to internationalization. Correspondingly, it will help to provide an answer to the following research questions:

(2) To which extent has the developments in HiOA's environment contributed to making internationalization into a strategic policy area? And how, if so, has HiOA responded to it?

(4) How has internationalization strategic policy been interpreted within HiOA?

Table 4: Typology of organizational responses

Type of strategic response	Tactics Interpretation	Predicting possible results of institutional actions in HEIs
<u>Acquiesce</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Habit</i> Following taken-for-granted norms • <i>Imitate</i> Mimicking institutional models • <i>Comply</i> Obeying rules and accepting norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reproduction of widely institutionalized roles (academics, students, administrative and leadership positions) based on the traditional definitions of these activities; - Intentional adaptation of the institutional profile to satisfy the expectations of the environment
<u>Compromise</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Balance</i> Balancing the expectations of multiple constituents • <i>Pacify</i> Placating institutional elements • <i>Bargain</i> Negotiating with institutional stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiation with a local government about the amount of incoming and outgoing students HiOA is expected to produce; - Partial adaptation to the accomplishment of the objective coming as a policy tool; - No changes are expected apart from the required ones
<u>Avoid</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conceal</i> Disguising non-conformity • <i>Buffer</i> Loosening institutional attachments • <i>Escape</i> Changing goals, activities, missions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a strategic plan for internationalization with no intention to follow and further implement it, i.e. engaging into “window-dressing” or symbolic acceptance of institutional norms, rules and requirements; - Endeavour to have not definite or not clear research profile in order to be buffered from scrutiny of the details of instructional activities. - Escaping the need for competing in important funding schemes by changing its objectives and mission to a more practical orientation
<u>Defy</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dismiss</i> Ignoring explicit norms and values • <i>Challenge</i> Contesting rules and requirements • <i>Attack</i> Assaulting the sources of the pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ignoring the demand to reorganize internal structure in case it drastically mismatches the institutional norms and values - Contest rational behind a policy, by naming it “not rational” and use this as an explanation to be not engaged - Attacking target audience of the positive opinion towards internationalization as a policy instrument
<u>Manipulate</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Co-opt</i> Importing influential constituents • <i>Influence</i> Shaping values and norms • <i>Control</i> Dominating institutional constituents and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making attempts to convince students in joining the decision-making groups to counteract their disagreement - Making attempts to affect the performance criteria by which HEIs are evaluated - Making attempts to change the way in which their achievements are announced to the public by developing their own rankings

Source: Adapted from Oliver (1991)

3.4 Analytical scheme

Applying a combined approach of the two underlying theoretical perspectives, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of how internationalization as a strategic policy area is interpreted and organized within a merged institution, and further helps to analyze the way in which the new institution handles to the environmental and external influence and responds to it.

Two main analytical expectations may be developed regarding the relationship between internationalization and university colleges. Meyer and Rowan (1991) develop the claim that organizations are viewed as dependent on their external environments, therefore they have to fulfill the expectations and demands that are coming from their environments. In other words, organizations have to be considered legitimate. To obtain legitimacy, they strive to bring into effect those expectations that are placed on them by their environments. Nevertheless, usually implementation perceived to be as a “window-dressing” or a “trend”, while at the same time the existent organizational behavior keeps on operating as before. Translating into this case study, this aspect of the institutional theory would assume HEIs to meet the expectations of internationalization so that to give the impression that they have adjusted to the given set of pressures and demands.

The other analytical expectation of the institutional theory (Selznick, 1984) argues that organizations operate within a social framework of norms, values and assumptions; therefore they strive to survive and protect their fundamental values and identities. To protect their social framework of norm and values, organizations normally withstand to implement the changes based on values in case that conflict with theirs. In order to understand the way internationalization is organized within HiOA, one has to take into account its institutional template and its set of rules.

To be able to explore patterns of strategic responses to internationalization, the governmental regulations, policies and intentions are taken as a point of departure. Both resource dependency and institutional theory will be helpful when it comes to the Norwegian government, which is considered to be a main source of organizational legitimacy and the key supplier of the critical resources. As discussed earlier in this chapter, organizational survival is dependent on the responsiveness to governmental demands and expectations. For

that reason, one can assume that the governmental regulations and policies, incentives and guidelines to a great extent guide the university college's behavior.

From the above reasoning, these ideas can provide us a set of expectations as to how changes with respect to internationalization as a strategic policy area within the university college are organized, implemented and interpreted in the university college. In terms of this case study, the framework for this thesis rests on the following assumptions.

Assumption 1: The newly merged university college (HiOA) without any radical change tries to integrate and to combine the internationalization policies and internationalization practices of the two previously separate institutions (OUC and AUC).

Assumption 2: HiOA endeavors to actively innovate its internationalization policies and practices and to streamline more efficient the way it operates within the institution.

Assumption 3: Internationalization in one way or another is related to the development in its environment. Hence, HiOA is muddling through and has not yet come into the phase where the institution reflects strategically on it.

Internationalization in HEIs may be analyzed as a case of organizational change (Gornitzka and Maassen 2000, see also Gornitzka 1999). HiOA is undergoing process of organizational change as the result of the merger in 2011, where the university college has to redesign its organizational and governance structure, its main strategies. In this process change there is also a question what is the newly merged university college going to do with internationalization?

In this way, the advantage of the merged institution as opposed to a non-merged, rests on the premise that the merged one (the case of HiOA) is not so much confined, limited or even “imprisoned” in its existing organizational structure, which is normally difficult to change in a HEI with well-established organizational set of rules, institutional culture, identities, traditions, values, etc. As HiOA a newly established university college (since 2011), by the virtue of merger, it was compelled to redesign its organizational structure anew. With this regard, the institutional leadership might have been compliant, ready and willing to go through the radical renewal of the internationalization strategic policy area, rather compared

to any other HEI that has not undergone a merger process. At the same time another assumption is that instead of the conformable radical renewal, HiOA might fall back into the paths the two separate institutions (OUC and AUC) were taken before the merger, therefore one could assume they have tried in a pragmatic way to combine them.

The probability of examining the way newly merged university college takes shape and organizes its area of internationalization is high in the following areas: a) internal governance, b) organization, c) funding. For that reason I will examine those sectors of internationalization in detail. The third research question of (3) how has internationalization as a strategic policy area been handled within HiOA will be addressed by empirical examining the way how internationalization is organized in the university college as to those three specific areas. The analysis will be carried out on the institutional level, as the notion of internationalization strategic area is relevant and applicable to the whole university college.

The research involves a thorough examination of how a new institution (HiOA) where a number of structural and administrative changes are to be reorganized and realized, integrates the way in which the two former separate institutions (OUC and AUC) carried out responsibilities to support its strategic policies with respect to internationalization, multiculturalism, internationalization at home, etc.

The goal with this thesis is foremost to focus on the organizational (institutional) structure of internationalization as a strategic policy area within the university college, not to approach the content area of internationalization in regard to its substance.

In this thesis internationalization is examined from the perspective of the environmental pressures arising from the Bologna Process, the Quality Reform and 2008 White Paper on internationalization of HE, and how HiOA, as a merged institution responds.

The underlying argument in favor of putting forward internationalization from the perspective of the environmental pressure propounds the view that there are a number of pressures from the environment (i.e. governmental legislation, rules and procedures, formal pressures, e.g. the Quality Reform – the “pressure/requirement” that is coming nationally) to

adapt internationalization to the new realities, expectations and demands from the society. Another point is the marked changes and challenges in the international regulative environment of HEIs. For example, the Bologna policies and initiatives and other processes of internationalization are directly and indirectly, through national government regulations and policies putting pressure on HEIs in order to “accommodate” their educational delivery (Frolich, 2006).

This calls for a systematic investigation, the way internationalization strategic area in the newly merged organization is organized, the way it finances its activities and the way it strategically operates decides itself which activities to promote and which not, and how to profile itself. Both the notion of resources and the notion of the institutional template are of importance, so even though HiOA strives to achieve a university status, to be the leading HEI in the national context, this, in how far does that have an impact on the institutional normative, regulative and cultural set of rules (Scott, 2001).

Taking into consideration the guiding principles and theoretical perspectives mentioned in this chapter and by matching them with the framework suggested by Oliver (1991), it will thereby be possible to address the question of how internationalization as a strategic policy area developed over the last four years (since merger) at HiOA, thereby addressing the following research questions:

- (1) To which extent did the merger effect the integration of both university colleges' (OUC's and AUC's) strengths regarding the internationalization dimension?*
- (3) How has internationalization as a strategic policy area in HEIs been interpreted?*

This will help contribute to better understanding of the way the newly merged institution, as a relatively new organization, facilitates, mobilizes and develops internationalization as its institutional strategic area.

4 Methodology

This section explains the choice of research design and describes the methodology used in the case study. This section builds on the discussion of theoretical perspectives found in Chapter 3. To begin with, a presentation of the research design of the study is presented and followed by the justification of the case selection, methods, data sources and analysis, comments on reliability and validity, limitations and ethical concerns.

4.1 Research Design

4.1.1 Case Study Research Design

This study is carried out utilizing qualitative methods and the research is based on an embedded case study design. Essentially, a case study involves the detailed and intensive investigation of a single case (Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, Yin (2014:16) defines a case study as

“... an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident”

The case study of HiOA is considered to be an embedded case study design (albeit a single-case study is employed), generally for the reason that this study involves the unit of analysis at more than one level, meaning that the attention within a single case is given to both to the subunits, which can enhance valuable opportunities and insights into the extensive analysis of the case study, and to the overall unit of the case study (Yin, 2014).

The rationale behind selecting HiOA as the case study is based on the research questions (see section 1.3). For this reason, Yin (2014: 51) states that this case can be considered to have a ‘critical character’ as the theoretical framework presented by Oliver (1991) in this thesis provide a clear set of circumstances within which our offered assumptions: a) whether HiOA tries to integrate and combine its internationalization policy from two separate university colleges OUC and AUC, or b) whether HiOA tries to innovate and modernize its

internationalization strategic policy area - are believed to be correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might also be relevant (Yin, 2014) (For more detailed information see sections 1.1 and 3.4). At the same time, one can also find the parallels with the 'revelatory case' since I attempt to analyze an aspect/dimension (development of internationalization within the institution as a result of environmental pressures, i.e. merger) that is well known by its internal actors but to an extent undiscovered from a scientific HE perspective. The development of an internationalization strategic policy area in a merged HEI in the Norwegian context, HiOA in particular, and the institution's responses and reactions to the development in its external environment tend to be assumed rather than being proved and thoroughly discovered. Subsequently, those points mentioned above are all relevant for this thesis.

4.1.2 The justification of the case selection

In terms of this master thesis, HiOA is highly relevant in the Norwegian context. There are several reasons to investigate this specific institution. First, it is the largest professionally oriented university college in Norway and major player in the Norwegian HEI context as a provider of knowledge and qualified labor to Norwegian society. Another reason to investigate this specific institution because the institution has recently (in 2011) gone through the merger, thus for the time being (as of 2014) it is going through a number of organizational and structural change processes with respect to internationalization policy area, which can be interpreted as the result of the merger process. Third, HiOA is located in the metropolitan region, which is constantly growing. This is a growth that is expected to continue and, therefore, the need for new study places will increase. As a result, the number of demands and expectations also with respect to internationalization from the variety of actors, i.e. state, government, local authorities, students, etc. are constantly increasing. Therefore, it is interesting to examine how HiOA faces these demands and responds to them. The reason why I look specifically at internationalization strategic policy area within a merged institution is based on the fact that the concept of it is seen as a central and an integral part in Norwegian higher education policy (St. meld. nr. 14, 2008-2009). The academic justification of increased internationalization asserts the idea that internationalization is a sure sign of academic quality (Gornitzka and Stensaker, 2004).

For this reason and based on the above-mentioned considerations, this thesis sets its focus on HiOA which was identified as a particularly interesting and appropriate case in terms of its new strategic objectives with respect to organizing and developing internationalization policy of the university college, and how these are planned to be achieved. Moreover, as the result of the merger, the institution has had an advantage of a fresh start when it comes to internationalization strategic policy area; therefore it is interesting to investigate how it has been organized with the institution (for more details see section 1.1).

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

4.2.1 Sources of evidence

Several sources of evidence have been used in order to be able to provide the answer to the research questions of the study. First, data were collected from a document analysis of relevant documents related to HiOA, merger and internationalization in general, namely institutional strategy documents and annual reports, regulations, meeting protocols, official documents deriving from the state, governmental policy documents, white papers, working papers and official websites. After that, 4 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted parallel to the document analysis. It will help to see the results from different angles, either confirming the patterns of the document analysis or possibly adding more additional information.

Document analysis

Relevant documentary information is likely to play an explicit role in any data collection in doing case study research as documents have their overall value. The benefit of using documentation is that it can be reviewed repeatedly and provide increased evidence from other sources corroborate the exact names, positions, references and organizations that are seen as important key actors. Moreover, documents cover a long span of time and setting (Yin, 2014). The key elements in the analysis of the main documents are used as supportive evidence that helps to respond to the research questions (see section 1.3). The document selection applied to this thesis was particularly based on its retrievability – the publicly listed documentations by the Ministry of Education were reviewed and relevant documents concerning issues of internationalization were selected. When it comes to HiOA, the

university college provides relatively free access to a wide variety of valuable documents. Most of the documents were downloaded from the official website of the university college and were selected based on their direct relationship to HEI policy development at the institution, discussions and meeting reports related to internationalization, merger, international programs and strategic partners, role of SIU, government and statistical databases. As most of the documents are of public interest, error and distortion rate can be assumed to be low, and both representativeness and trustworthiness are high (Yin, 2014). It is important to mention, some part of the collected literature was written in English, whereas the other part was in Norwegian. The majority of the documents was retrieved electronically which is an online version of the original document from the Ministry of Education and HiOA's (OUC and AUC) homepages and is available as an online-pdf document. The documents used for the analysis presented in the table below:

Table 5: Documents used for analysis

Type of the document	Original title	Translated title	Publisher	Page number	Access
Strategy document	Strategisk plan 2007 – 2011	Institutional strategy for Akershus University college	AUC	12	Online
Strategy document	Strategiplan for Høgskolen I Oslo 2008 - 2011	Institutional strategy for Oslo University college	OUC		Online
Minutes	Møtebok – arbeidsgruppe for internasjonalisering 2010	Minutes from the Board – working group for internationalization 2010	OUC-AUC	8	Online
Draft mandate	Internasjonalt utvalg ved HiOA - utkast til mandat og sammensetting	International Committee at HiOA - draft mandate and composition	OUC-AUC	10	Online
Strategy document	Strategi for universitetssatsing 2010	Strategy for achieving university status	OUC-AUC	18	Online
Strategy document	Handlingsplan for internasjonalisering 2013 - 2015	Action plan for internationalization for 2013 - 2015	HiOA	2	Online
Strategy document	Handlingsplan for internasjonalisering 2014 – 2017	Action plan for internationalization for 2014 - 2017	HiOA	14	Online
Strategy document	Ny viten. Ny praksis. Strategi 2020 for Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus.	New Knowledge. New Practice. Strategy 2020 for HiOA	HiOA		Online
Erasmus Policy Statement	Erasmus Policy Statement. Part D of application for ECHE 2014.	-	HiOA	4	Online
White paper, report to the Norwegian Parliament	Gjør din plikt – Krev din rett. Kvalitetsreform av høyere utdanning. St.meld. nr. 27 (2000-	Do your duty – demand your rights. Quality Reform of higher education.	Ministry of Church, Education and	6	Online

	2001)	Report No. 27 (2000-2001)	Research		
White paper, report to the Norwegian Parliament	Internasjonalisering av utdanning, St.meld. nr. 14 (2008-2009)	Internationalization of Education in Norway, Report No. 14 to the Storting (2008-2009)	Ministry of Education and Research	18	Online

Interviews

The in-depth semi-structured interviews were the most important sources of this study as they provided first-hand information on the way the internationalization strategic policy area was interpreted and developed in a recently merged university college. Through interviewing university college actors it is likely to shed light on the way the internationalization strategic policy area relates to the developments in institutional environment and to investigate how the university college responds to it. By the means of collecting as much data as possible from the documents listed above, it was important to clarify the information needed for further analysis. In this regard, interviews serve as a helpful tool for extracting necessary information from the institutional key actors into internationalization process and bring the focus onto the matters that needed clarification for further analysis (Bryman, 2012).

A total of four face-to-face interviews with representatives from HiOA were undertaken in June 2015. HiOA's leaders and administrative staff involved in internationalization became important sources of information. The argument for selecting these specific actors is two-fold: first, because they are the central actors directly involved into internationalization strategic policy area at HiOA and second, they tend to put greater insight and emphasis on the strategic issues of internationalization. Consequently, the interviewees included: one representative of the senior management, two representatives currently responsible for HiOA's internationalization matters and finally, one representative who is presently (as of 2015) actively involved into internationalization at the faculty level at HiOA. Moreover, this interviewee was the key actor responsible for internationalization activities formerly at one of the university colleges before HiOA's merger in 2011. The interviewees were identified through the documents and HiOA's website search. Each interview partner was contacted by e-mail providing the information and rationale behind the research study with a further request for an interview. The overall response level was very high: all persons contacted agreed to participate. An interview guide was used (see Appendix 1) and the notes were taken during the interview process. The interviews were held in English and lasted between 60 – 90 minutes. All the interviews were digitally audio-recorded after the participants agreed on it.

The interviews were completely transcribed in English, which in total produced 65 pages of text for further data analysis. Each of the respondents received a code from H01 – H04.

When conducting the document analysis and analyzing the interview data, one of the objectives was also to identify the environmental factors, external conditions and interactions the informants referred to while discussing internationalization development with the university college. Therefore, the research strategy for mapping the significant HiOA's environment and institution's possible response to it has been identified as deductive and descriptive.

4.2.2 Criteria for evaluating the findings of the study

When doing empirical social research, it is very important to ensure the quality of the design and the chosen methods. This section follows the ideas of Bryman (2012) and Yin (2014) who point out to different criteria on how the findings of the study could be interpreted according to construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2014).

Construct validity

In order to ensure construct validity of any study it is crucial to verify that the thesis is not defined on the basis of the researcher's subjective, personal impressions only, but rather on the theoretical propositions drawing on the literature review. To identify the correct operational measurement for the concepts being studied and the usage of multiple source of evidence are essential indicators for construct validity (Yin 2014). In terms of this master thesis, it is important to take into account the concepts used in previous studies while at the same time concentrate on the current results in progress. Relating to this study, various sources of evidence have been employed with the aim to validate the line of reasoning (e.g. state and university documents and interviews with key members). Without any prior explanation of which operational components compose the phenomenon of organisational development and change, the potential reader is not able to determine whether the organisational development that took place within HiOA with respect to internationalization in reality does reflect the actual development change taking place in the institution or whether those statements rather based on the researcher's impression only (Yin, 2014). From the above reasoning, this study applies a detailed classification of institution's strategic responses

based on Oliver's (1991) framework. By providing the detailed definition and further explanation of the researched phenomena and by distinguishing operational variables the study makes an effort to strengthen its construct validity.

Internal validity

The concern over internal validity is mostly related to explanatory case studies, when for example there is causal relation between two or more variables, i.e. when the researcher tries to explain "how and why case 'x' led to case 'y'" (Yin 2014; 47). In this study, for instance one proposition could be that the influence of the internationalization policy on the institution (which in itself is unobservable phenomenon) can be inferred from the observation of various operationalized variables as for example guidelines from the government which are written down in the actual documents and might have changed in the period of time since for example the Quality Reform has been implemented (Yin, 2014).

Internal validity also entails how true the findings are and how the others could accept them. It ensures that the research was carried out according to the canons of good practice and that the findings can prove that the researcher has correctly understood the social world and the case that he/she was analyzing, in other words, how the findings match a reality (Bryman, 2004). Therefore the following question is important to be asked: have I, as a researcher, managed to interpret and present in the realistic and trustworthy way information about the way internationalization as strategic policy area interpreted, organized and developed in HiOA? This is one of the main questions I asked myself while writing the thesis. This criterion is ensured by double-checking data from different sources.

External validity

When it comes to criterion of external validity it first of all gives an indication whether the results of the research study can be generalized and used beyond the specific research context, regardless of the research methods that was employed (Yin, 2014). Therefore, it is important to pay attention at the original research question in the study, as "the form of the question can help or hinder the preference for seeking generalisations" (Yin, 2014: 48). Supplementing the study design with 'how' and 'why' questions is helpful in terms of

analytical generalization. Nevertheless, it is important to differentiate between analytic generalization – expending and generalizing theories and statistical generalization – enumerating the frequencies.

In terms of this case study, I analyse a case that naturally exists, describing different aspects of it in a given context, providing rich and detailed examination. It provides some other actors, for example leadership and management in HEIs that went through the merger with opportunities to reflect on and to analyse the situations in their own institutions when it comes to internationalization. Of course, there is a lot of variation from the case under the study to the previous cases found in the literature; therefore it could be difficult to determine the relevance of the findings to the situations. But rich description provides enough information so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether the findings can be transferred.

Reliability

Reliability, as parallel to the idea of dependability, overall concerns in which ways a study is repeatable and it is being used to define the consistency of a study. Bryman (2012) states that reliability is based on the assumption that there is a single reality and that studying it repeatedly will bring the same results. For instance, if at some point later another researcher followed the same methods and techniques, he/she is expected to get to the same finding again. The question is not whether the findings will be found again in the next study but whether the results are consistent with the data collected. This issue depends enormously on the reliability of sources and documents used in the study and on the analytical tools used by a researcher. In the present research official documents obtained from states, governmental institutions, private resources and scientific research outputs are used. These types of sources, discussed earlier in the same chapter, correspond to a large extend such criteria as authenticity, credibility, representiveness and meaning (clear comprehensive sense and implications) so that it minimizes the doubt about the consistency of the study.

The rationale behind reliability is “to minimize the errors and biases in a study” which could be ensured if the researcher at minimum detailed every step of the research process, including keeping notes and records at all the stages.

5 Creating Internationalization as a Strategic Policy Area: from OUC - AUC to HiOA

In this chapter a brief overview and the key developments over the way internationalization strategic policy area has been shaped in OUC and AUC prior to the merger are discussed, thereby addressing the first research question of “(1) *To what extent did the merger effect the integration of both university colleges’ (OUC’s and AUC’s) strengths regarding the internationalization dimension?*”. Consequently, it will shed light on the way internationalization strategic area is organized at HiOA at the moment (as of 2015). Next, I go through how HiOA follows up on its most important strategic documents, namely Strategy 2020 and the Strategy for achieving university status, and analyze how these documents apply to internationalization. Towards the end of the chapter I look at how HiOA presents its international policy goals in the key documents. Important to mention that data and statistics that are collected in this chapter will also be of significant importance when analyzing and discussing the findings of this thesis. Most of the documents were collected from the websites of the particular institutions (i.e. OUC, AUC, HiOA and NIFU). In order to ensure transparency of the study, the particular web-links are linked directly in the footnotes. Some of the figures were created on the basis of numbers of Norwegian database for statistics in higher education (DBH - “Database for Statistikk om Høgre utdanning”).

5.1 OUC’s and AUC’s Strategic Plans as to Internationalization

This section aims to investigate OUC’s and AUC’s institutional strategies with respect to internationalization, developed in the interplay between the changing context due to the merger discussion (see section 2.2.2) and the organizations’ core tasks, in which both colleges operated. OUC and AUC had adopted strategic plans that described operational objectives on a fairly specific level up to 2011.

In the same way, when it comes to the institutions' overarching mission, the question of the eventual merger can be seen in relation to institutional strategic objectives of both universities (see chapter 2.2). Internationalization strategies can be adapted both to the organizational environment and to the organizational peculiarities, such as international linking of academic, student and research communities (Frølich, 2006b: 408). The empirical basis of the analyses builds on the in-depth document analysis of the OUC and AUC strategic plans before the merger in 2011 took place. The strategic plans present profound characteristics and goal setting within university colleges as the plans essentially shed light on what exactly has been prioritized during the specific periods of time, and which issues have been central. Eventually, this section will help to analyze the development process of internationalization as a strategic policy area starting from former OUC and AUC prior the merger in 2011; then, I shed light on which basis and why internationalization in HiOA is organized the way it is and how internationalization is implied in the main institutional strategic documents. This investigation will help to provide a response to the research questions (4) how internationalization as a strategic policy area has been interpreted at HiOA after the merger was formalized and (2) to which extent the merger effected the integration of both university colleges' strengths regarding the internationalization dimension?

Oslo University College

OUC has always considered internationalization to be one of the important attributes of the institution (Frølich 2005). To promote the internationalization dimension and enhance institution's international activity, OUC had developed a set of strategic goals, plans and instruments. The organizational structure regarding the internationalization area within the college consisted of an internationalization council under the board, international office under the student administration and international coordinators in the departments, who had their own resources for internationalization (Frølich, 2008). The international office at OUC was first established in 2001 with six full time employees and functioned as a policy-developing unit, as well as service institution for both faculties and students. The office was primarily responsible for coordinating agreements and programs on international cooperation as well as consulting students, staff, administrative personnel and faculties. OUC has also come out with an Action Plan for internationalization (2002), which became a driving force for strengthening the field of international cooperation (Maassen et al. 2004; Frølich, 2008: 115).

2001-2003

OUC's institutional strategic plan clearly pointed out that the institution operates in a global economy, meaning the diverse multicultural society, where multicultural and international activities are highly strategically prioritized (OUC, 2001a). By having a strong international profile was considered to be beneficial for both student and staff recruitment. For that reason, OUC has come out with an international strategic plan to promote an incentive for the development of international activity. As to the development of internationalization area, the plan (Strategiplan for HiO 2001-2003) set its focus on the following areas: a) increased staff and student mobility¹⁶; b) improved integration of the international students and the need to provide better conditions on receiving them; c) strengthen the organization in order to push forward the process of internationalization within the institution; and lastly, d) all study programs were required to offer at least one course in English.

The international office was responsible for creating a market strategy for the active enrolment of international students in close cooperation with the college's faculties. The web was also considered an important tool in this process (Maassen et al., 2004). Through the strategic plan it can be indicated that OUC's aim for internationalization was not only to increase the quality of education and research through the increased participation in international research and development (R&D) and international student- and staff mobility programs (Maassen et al., 2004), but also to actively participate in the world's international research arena. As of 2001, OUC had international exchange agreements with about 120 HEIs in Europe (Maassen et al., 2004:112). Particularly mobility schemes were deemed as one of the most effective ways to promote and strengthen internationalization at OUC, at the same time when, for example, recruitment of international students was only considered as a prerequisite for increased mobility. In addition, OUC was striving to increase the number of outgoing students, however, it had not set any particular goal in regard to approximate number of exchange students OUC would like to recruit per year (OUC, 2001a). It is worth mentioning that both the Ministry of Education through the Quality Reform, which taking place at that time, actively promoted student mobility within formal exchange programs, notably influenced the way OUC's strategic plan was articulated. To promote staff mobility,

¹⁶ recruitment of international students and staff both from the EU exchange programs and bilateral agreements with countries outside of EU

OUC aimed on being competent enough to engage in competition for international funding. Moreover, it strived to be in line with international research fellowships (OUC 2001a). Therefore, more focus has also been set on international research collaborations. Nonetheless, the international dimension at OUC is not merely framed with reference to research quality, but rather to global solidarity (with developing countries) and a strong competition for international funding, students, etc. (Frølich, 2006).

To conclude, OUC seemed to demonstrate success in following up the goals; however, there was still work to be done as to the framework of the implementation of the Quality Reform, which was right in the processes of its development at that time. Under the concept of internationalization the institutional plan (OUC 2001a) mainly referred to those activities connected to student and staff mobility. Analysis of OUC's key documents, including the strategic plan for 2001-2003, indicates that an active recruitment of international students has not been prioritized at that time. The reason was that the majority of the study programs at OUC were inflexible in terms of offering sufficient number of courses in English; hence, as a result it hindered student mobility. Therefore, one of the main aims of the strategic plan was also to make structural changes within the educational programs in order to boost the number of international applicants. As a result, already in 2002, seven courses at OUC were offered in English, and several master programs were planned to provide teaching in English (Maassen et al. 2004). OUC noticeably underlined the importance of multiculturalism and international environment in the institution's next strategic plan for 2008- 2011, which is being examined in the next paragraph.

2008 – 2011

The concepts of *diversity* and *multiculturalism* are seen to be well-embedded into the internationalization within the college. Particularly clear it has been highlighted in OUC's strategic plan for 2008–2011, where the strategic plan for 2001-2003 was followed up to be used as a basis for the development of the plan for 2008-2011. Accordingly, multicultural and international learning environment was defined as one of the priority areas (in line with research and development) for that period of time (OUC 2008). The OUC report no. 10 (2007)¹⁷ pointed out that since 1996, OUC was actively working on improving its study

¹⁷ OUC Report 2007 No. 10 "Towards a multicultural practice at Oslo University College" by Marit Greek and

conditions for international students. This calls for a systematic investigation of how the university college created a multicultural study environment. In case of OUC, both students and academics were seen as the key actors to acquire a multicultural practice within the institution and the need of the institution's activities to be regulated by diversity¹⁸. Notably, at that time the Norwegian government announced 2008 as the year of "Cultural diversity"¹⁹ (St. meld. nr. 17, 2005-2006)²⁰, where the government's focus was on the multicultural area in a close correspondence with international initiatives in the cultural area. At the same time, the European Commission together with the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers contributing in different ways, put diversity policies on the agenda. As a result, the European Commission proposed that 2008 would be the European year of intercultural dialogue (European Union, decision no. 1983, 2006)²¹.

In line with those policies and guidelines, OUC's strategic plan for 2008 – 2011 emphasized precisely diversity and multiculturalism as the priority area for that period. With respect to internationalization, OUC was seen as the key contributor to innovation and wealth creation to a multicultural, international labor market and society (OUC 2008). The strategy plan has also put emphasis on OUC's learning and student environment, which aimed to be characterized by diversity and by the active participation of both students and staff. Innovation, respect, loyalty and generosity were considered to be the central values for interaction (OUC 2008). One of the newly introduced objectives in the strategy plan for 2008-2011, when compared to plan for 2001-2003, was directed on the recruitment of minorities (both students and staff), which is seen as part of the diversity concept. By consciously recruiting individuals from minority backgrounds, OUC's students and staff were believed to get the opportunity to acquire this expertise. It is essential for achieving the main goal of a multicultural and international study environment within the institution.

To summarize, this section shed light on OUC's efforts to create an inclusive and multicultural college. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the strategic plan is focused more nationally rather than internationally. The combination of multicultural and international aspects makes an interesting point that could have been additionally examined by asking the

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¹⁸ Diversity in this context implies to equality, tolerance, inclusive working environment, obtaining the benefits of diversity', efficient utilization of resources and the 'we' feeling (OUC 2008)

¹⁹ '2008' som markeringsår for kulturelt mangfold

²⁰ <https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/Stmeld-nr-17-2005-2006-/id200480/>, accessed 4.04.2015

²¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TEXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006D1983&from=EN>, accessed 4.04.2015

question what does this mean to recruit 'minorities' as well as 'international', taking into consideration that those are two very different groups of students, staff, researchers, etc. However, it opens up a new topic for discussion, that to a small extent, interacts with the purpose of this thesis nevertheless could be an idea for further research.

Akershus University College

Compared to the bigger, centrally located OUC, AUC had a relatively different set of programs, values and traditions. The main cultural difference underlined by Mathisen and Pinheiro (2015) was that AUC had not experienced the same degree of academic drift or academization (Kyvik, 2007) as OUC. AUC's central focus was to provide education on a vocationally basis, cooperate with the local environment and support society. Despite the fact that AUC was a regionally oriented institution, it had an established international office and also a strategy committee. The international office was under the division of the departments of education administrative affairs. Its main task was to facilitate student mobility. This organizational structure at AUC was regarded to promote not only student mobility, but also international research collaboration (Frolich, 2005).

2007-2011

ACU's strategy plan for 2007 – 2011 consisted of six parts: college's position in future educational communities, teaching and learning, research and development, communication and regional development, external financed activities, management and organizational development. AUC's overarching objective of the strategic plan for 2007 – 2011 stated, that students should develop themselves into attractive, innovative and creative future professionals. According to AUC's strategic plan (AUC, 2007), college's objectives for the period were first and foremost focused on the development of academic communities within the college aiming at delivering universal education and conduct research on high national and international levels. Secondly, AUC's externally funded activities were expected to contribute to dissemination of knowledge gained from R&D to AUC's partners, while business actors were expected to contribute to the development of the college's research environment. It was believed to contribute to development of innovation in region and society (AUC 2007). Lastly, AUC was expected to further develop its activities to effectively

ensure the realization of college's goals, while creating a working environment that effectively supported the value creation (ibid).

Turning now to AUC's institutional strategy plan for 2007-2011 with respect to internationalization, the analysis showed that internationalization per se was far not one of the college's priorities. The reason is that the institution did not strive to become internationally recognized; the goal was rather regionally focused to be professionally oriented, multi-disciplinary HEI and contribute to future welfare by educating practitioners with high levels of professional ability. Besides, the strategic plan for 2007 - 2011 mentioned that the study programs should have an international orientation, meaning that all degree programs should be designed for foreign students and have set of agreements for mutual student- and teacher exchanges, cooperation and research (AUC 2007). Nevertheless, there was no strategy with respect to when students ought to go abroad, yet it has also been outlined that all studies at the college would be characterized by an international orientation and, if possible, would have a global perspective. It was also suggested that master studies should be offered in English only, while for the bachelor programs would be developed appropriate modules in English. Similarly to OUC's strategic plan for 2008 – 2011, AUC emphasized that an increased recruitment of staff with multicultural backgrounds also needs to be facilitated.

5.1.1 Strategic plans in comparison

While comparing the former OUC's and AUC's institutional strategic plans, significant variations can be defined in the goals and objectives, research, teaching, quality and colleges' structure (see Table 7).

Table 6: Comparison of the strategic plans

	OUC Strategy plan		AUC Strategy plan 2007-2011
	2001-2003	2008-2011	
Goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased teacher and student mobility. *Increased recruitment of international students through EU exchange programs and bilateral agreements with countries outside EU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Multicultural and international study environment. *Relationship between R&D and education at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identity development into attractive, innovative and creative future professionals. *Deliver universal vocational education. *Conduct research on a high national and international level.

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Strong emphasis on the increase of quality in research; *Participating in international research collaboration; *Increasing competitive research activities through the EU framework programs and the Research Council of Norway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Prioritized strongly. *Commitment to community-related R&D in professional studies and multicultural issues; *Encouraging researchers to take part in international knowledge dissemination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increased level of competition among other HEIs; *Not strong enough in conducting research on a high national and international level; *Relatively low research profile amongst staff.
Internationalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Student exchange; *Increasing the number of students that go abroad. *Participating in the mobility programs: Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates/ERASMUS *Integrating an international dimension into the study programs *Active international cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *High internationalization ambitions; *Moderate central institutional infrastructure for internationalization *Formal cooperation partners in mainly Europe and developing countries; *New agreements with foreign HEIs on student mobility. *Internationalization at home. *Integration of students into Norwegian education and study environment. *Access to Norwegian HE and labor market *Integration of students with minority background and exchange students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Moderate to low internationalization ambitions. *Weak to moderate central institutional infrastructure for internationalization; *Formal cooperation partners mainly in the region and some developing countries; *Designing degree programs for foreign students; *Need for negotiating a set of agreements for mutual student- and teacher exchanges.
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *International knowledge dissemination; *International orientation of the study programs as a key that motivates students to go abroad; *Increased collaboration with the foreign colleagues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Adapted study programs to meet and maintain greater diversity in the student group; *Diversified, tolerated and equalized learning and working environment; *Pedagogical approach that contributes to put value different people culturally and individually *Conducting systematic educational development work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cooperation and interaction with relevant actors within society and industry; * Spreading knowledge gained from R&D to the society.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increasing the academic quality in education and research *Academic quality as an aspect of internationalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Institutional flexibility * Quality assurance of multicultural practice at OUC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Education of high academic and pedagogical quality.
Structure, administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Established international office *The formal structure of OUC is to be changed due to internationalization *Encouraging faculties and departments to apply for competitive research funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *International campus is important when competing for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Developing and creating a working environment that effectively supports the value creation. *Independent international office (part of the Department of Education Administrative Affairs). *Established strategy committee.

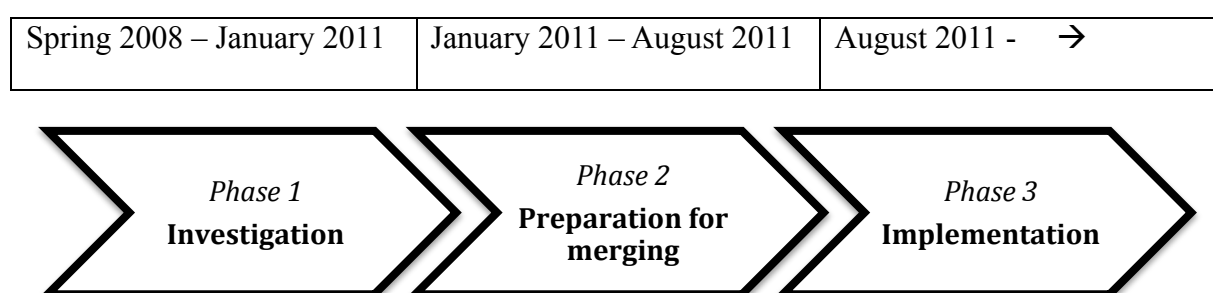
As to the internationalization dimension, it was mentioned in all of the plans, however, somewhat marginally and implicitly when it comes to AUC strategic plan. By contrast, OUC

put internationalization to an extent higher on its agenda as a result of the developments in the environment, mainly the implementation of the Quality Reform, which determined internationalization to be one of the most significant premises for quality enhancement, student achievement and innovation in HEI. OUC's both institutional strategic plans, for 2001-2003 and 2008-2011, significantly promoted an increased international activity, viewed academic quality as an important aspect of internationalization, promoted multicultural and international learning environment and R&D was highly prioritized. OUC had also an established actively functioning international office responsible for creating a market strategy for the active enrolment of international students in cooperation with the university college's faculties. Whereas AUC primarily positioned itself as highly professionally oriented institution and an attractive regional partner for both public and private institutions and enterprises. Accordingly, internationalization was not prioritized and the college was not strong enough in conducting research on a high national and international level. Nevertheless, education of high academic and pedagogical quality was highly stressed.

5.1.2 Merger process

The dialogue between the academic and the administrative leaders of OUC and AUC about an extended cooperation and eventual possibility for a merger between the two university colleges was initiated in spring 2008 (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Merger process between OUC and AUC



During summer the case drafts for boards at OUC and AUC were prepared, which recommended that a process for clarifying the conditions for closer cooperation or merger has started. Boards at both university colleges endorsed the proposal and initiated the further investigation of the case. Their work resulted in the report “One region - two colleges?” [Én

region – to høyskoler?]²² which was delivered in 2009. The purpose of the report was to point out that there would be synergy of effects with regard to education, research and development activities and administration.

In September 2008, the leadership of OUC and AUC discussed a case of “Future relations between Oslo UC and Akershus UC” (OUC: S-case 36/2008 and AUC: case 54/08), according to which the members of the board of the both institutions agreed on intention to investigate and clarify possible aspects of the OUC and AUC institutional network cooperation and further on, develop and grow together as one institution. For this reason the board members of the two above mentioned institutions endorsed the creation of a steering committee which main goal was to pilot this process. Important to mention, that rectors were granted authority to appoint participants to the steering committee and further, to establish closer mandate for work. The steering committee consisted of the both colleges' management members, namely two rectors, an external chairman at AUC and a college director at OUC), also the board representatives (two external, two internal and two students) – the same number from each institution. As the basis for further work, the members of the board approved an agreement, which was developed in October 2008 (OUC: case 46/2008 and AUC: case 70/80). The agreement clearly stated the following points: a) the eventual merger process of the two colleges happens between two equal parties; b) the existing campus continues its existence; c) the future mutual growth and development takes place at both campuses, with the possible study programs in the other areas of the region; d) new name of the college, common logo and graphic identity will be consequently developed (ibid). In addition, the agreement identifies key areas for cooperation, and the academic focus areas institutions envisioned by the agreement.

The steering committee appointed a project group of 12 members from each institution that would be responsible for the actual assessment work. In addition to the employees at colleges, students and representatives from trade unions also participated in the group. In April 2009 the project group submitted its report to a respective body for consideration. The consultation deadline was set to 10 September. As a result, the two boards discussed the report in October 2009, and it was decided that the two university colleges should continue working together in cooperation. The core goals for merging two colleges were presented by the Program

²²En region – to høyskoler? http://home.hio.no/forskerforbundet/HiO-HiAk/uttalelser/IU-FF_horing.pdf

Statement adopted in Board meetings 28 October 2009 (hio-hiak, 2009)²³. The basic principles and goals behind the merger were as follows:

- a) to create leading academic environment within the professional education, professionally oriented R&D and professional studies in health care and welfare, kindergarten and school, technical/industrial manufacturing, energy and environment, culture and communication;
- b) to increase the quality of teaching, research, dissemination and artistic development in order to ensure good student recruitment (3-5000 new study places within 5-10 years);
- c) to strengthen relationship with the milieu in Oslo and Akershus region, with emphasis on meeting the big city challenges with regards to college's environment, technology, multicultural upbringing and welfare on the national level, whereas on international the aim was to reinforce cooperation and networking with HEIs abroad by encouraging a continuous increase of the exchange students and staff and stimulating R&D cooperation;
- d) to develop a coordinated, adaptable range of lifelong education and establish learning and working environment characterized by diversity, satisfaction and commitment among students and staff (ibid).

5.1.3 Strategy for Achieving University Status

HiOA has the clear ambition to become a university with the professional-oriented profile by the end of 2016 (Strategi for universitetssatsing²⁴, 2010). The leadership of both OUC and AUC prior to the merger approved the strategy document in September 2010. As stated in the document, the vision is that

"... the university status would provide the academic freedom and necessary leverage to meet the important research and educational needs in the society",²⁵

(Strategi for universitetssatsing 2010).

University status is seen as an important contribution to HiOA's educational- and research environment, which can increase its participation, recognition and importance in national and international knowledge networks. Professional education is expected to be the bedrock of

23 Mål for sammenslåing, Programerklæring vedtatt i styremøter 28. oktober 2009

<http://hio-hiak.no/content/view/full/972>

²⁴ Strategi for universitetssatsing, 2010

http://www.hioa.no/Mediabiblioteket/node_52/node_1507/Strategi-for-universitetssatsing

²⁵ Strategi for universitetssatsing <http://hio-hiak.no/Dokumenter/Strategi-for-universitetssatsing>, Accessed: 11.03.2015

the new university. In addition, high quality scientific- and professional activities are the profound goals the new institution should strive for, as it shall provide the direction for the development of knowledge culture, organization and reputation (Strategi for universitetssatsing 2010). While analyzing the central elements of this document, and one can argue that the strategy brings out the importance by two ways. First is to implement measures that make HiOA able to fulfill the statutory requirements in order for applying to become an accredited university. Later on, after the change of government in autumn 2013, these efforts seem, on the other hand, to have a clear political dimension that is about to relate to government's (temporary) halt of approval of new universities. Undoubtedly, HiOA has come forward in fulfilling the formal requirements of a university accreditation by NOKUT since its merger (NOKUT, 2011). This applies to the number of PhD programs that have increased from three to six (whereas NOKUT's requirement is four).

5.2 HiOA's Strategic Choices and Internationalization

The strategic steps for analyzing the way HiOA handles its internationalization policy area could be defined through two key institutional documents: a) Strategy for University Initiative (Strategy 2010) and b) Strategy Plan 2020 for HiOA²⁶ (Strategy 2020, 2012), and. Inasmuch as HiOA positions itself as an internationally oriented institution, the goal of the next sections is to examine to extent to which internationalization is involved into the main institutional strategic plan and its significant building blocks (i.e. research, education and dissemination, human and financial resources) at HiOA. Both data collected from a document analysis and interviews is supportive evidence to responding the research questions.

5.2.1 Strategy Plan for 2012 – 2020 (Strategy 2020)

Strategy 2020 is intentionally a concise document built around four statutory duties of a HEI, i.e. research, education, external relations and dissemination and human and financial resources. Admittedly, the fourfold division of the strategy plan is in line with sectoral objectives from the government (via the Ministry of Education) and it is to an extent typical

²⁶ <http://www.hioa.no/eng/About-HiOA/Virksomhetsstyring/Strategies>

for strategies in Norwegian HE sector. Significantly, the Strategy 2020 plan contains a separate section, "Strategy for achieving university status as a tool for raising standards". This very part of the strategy is designed as a transversal commitment that goes across the four objectives within the other four sections (education, research and development, external relations and dissemination and human and financial resources). The university initiative is further deepened through the "Strategy for university initiative" (section 5.1.3), where all the arguments for HiOA to become a university have been reviewed, university foundation and profile been described, and the visions and values that underlie have been set up.

The main goal within the field of *education* with respect to internationalization outlines HiOA's strive to be an international leader in professional education. It might be argued that the objective "to become an international leader" appears to be ambitious in relation to the corresponding sub-points of the strategic plan, as only one point 'international cooperation with programs at all levels' is explicit about internationalization (Strategy 2020, 2012). Here, in the area of education, HiOA comes up with effective initiatives to becoming the leading professional institution, however, it reports on fewer specific actions for HiOA to be an "international leader". By internationalizing and giving priority to *Research and Development (R&D)* HiOA aims to develop knowledge that can provide better solutions to the key challenges. As discussed in Chapter 2.3, internationalization at HiOA is seen as a tool for high-quality development, therefore active participation in international research cooperation is seen as a prerequisite to the college's success (ibid). Similarly, HiOA's *external relations and dissemination* with business and society are believed to enhance the relevance of its research, however, rather in national context than international, and the development of relevant study programs within HiOA. Last but not the least, rational allocation of *human and financial resources* is an important instrument to strengthen internationalization strategic area within HiOA. These resources apply to internationalization in terms of beneficial external funding coming from mobility programs, and the importance of having a competent policy as to recruitment international staff. Not to mention that in line with the strategy plan HiOA positions itself as an internationally recognized and attractive workplace that wants its employees to the greatest extent reflect the diversity and multiculturalism of the population (Strategy 2020, 2012). These strategic initiatives in line with the Strategy Plan 2020 give the impression that the systematic work with respect to internationalization is being performed in order to professionalize the institution and work its way closer to achieving university status.

5.3 Action Plans for Internationalization at HiOA

Inasmuch as internationalization shares common elements with aspects of the institutional strategy and policy, since 2011 HiOA has adopted two Action plans for internationalization. The analysis of the strategic plans shows that the aims and policies of HiOA's internationalization strategy have an implied linkage to the institutional strategic plan (Strategy 2020) and the overall internationalization policy from the Norwegian Ministry of higher education (H01). The interview data show that internationalization at HiOA is regarded to be an integrated part of the general strategy of institution. At the institutional level the plans are seen as a general internationalization strategy, which first and foremost, aims at strengthening the international network cooperation. When enquired about Strategy 2020, the informants indicated that HiOA actively aims to be internationally recognized for its variety of professional study programs (H04), which accurate to the Strategy's statement on it. Therefore, HiOA sets the goal to cooperate internationally on a variety of levels. The intention was first and foremost to strengthen the strategic cooperation with a selected number of universities of applied sciences (HiOA, 2012).

5.3.1 2013 – 2015

The international Committee at HiOA adopted the first action plan for internationalization in November 2012 for 2013 - 2015. It was developed on the basis of the four target areas in the institutional strategic plan (Strategy 2020) and related to strategies for internationalization. The action plans are grounded on the Committee's propositions to the institutional leadership. Professionally oriented actions and initiatives across the faculties considered being central to institutional profile (H04). Such measures will come in addition to specific faculty and departmental initiatives on internationalization.

The analysis shows that the action plan emphasized the need for a more holistic approach to internationalization, namely the strategic partnerships with a focus on the Nordic countries and EU and membership in strategic networks and applications (H03). Furthermore, a particular focus was set on strengthening links between research and education. In order to increase internationalization, the plan proposed the following: a) to develop and offer more courses and study programs in English; b) establish several international joint degrees; c) improve all the information available in English at the university college's website in general

and the study programs in particular. Moreover, one interviewee mentioned that this action plan brought out the importance to stimulate an international learning environment by means of promoting staff mobility, providing educational courses to international students, and raising the awareness and competence of international students' needs and inquires (H04). In line with the plan for internationalization for 2013-2015, it was expected that information in English on HiOA's website will establish a positive direction for internationalization in the years to come (H02, H04). However, this point in the plan was not wholly fulfilled and still needs to be bettered. The webpages are restricted to the specific target groups (international staff and students who are already at HiOA), and contain small degree promotion of the college targeting for potentially new international students and staff. In the eyes of one of the interviewee, further development of the webpages in English is a part of the project's developing of new webpages HiOA (H04).

5.3.2 2014 – 2017

When inquired about the strategy plan for internationalization HiOA is guided by currently (2015), respondents expressed that the revised action plan has been developed by a former head of the international office (H01) at the request of the rector's leadership meeting in January 2014, and later, in October 2014 it has been submitted to the Board for discussion and resolution (H03). The obtained data shows that the existent plan for internationalization (2014-2017)²⁷ as well as the preceding one (2013-2015) is based on the HiOA's overall institutional strategy plan "Strategy 2020". The observation is that all the main strategic areas from the action plan for 2013 – 2015 were integrated into the existent plan for 2014-2017. However, the interview analysis indicates that the plan's structure is inspired by the action plans for internationalization from the other HEIs in Norway:

"... whatever is written about the internationalization strategy at HiOA, you would find a lot of comparison in other HEIs in Norway" (H01).

That can be explained by the fact that when it comes to internationalization activities in Norway there is a tendency that most HEIs are developing their plans for internationalization in accordance to the national policy for internationalization of higher education (Report to the

²⁷ Handlingsplan for Internasjonalisering HiOA (2014-2017)

Starting 2008-2009). The action plan for internationalization for 2014 - 2017 aims particularly on achieving the specific set of goals with respect to Strategy 2020 (HiOA, 2014a). The following areas described below (strategic cooperation, internationalization of students and staff, research and international reputation) have been highlighted in the actual document and indicated during the interview process.

Strategic partnerships and cooperation. In regards of HiOA's international relations, today the strong emphasis is set towards an active strategic cooperation with HEIs and organizations outside Norway. At the moment of conducting the interviews (Mai - June 2015), the Netherlands (at the institutional level) was one of the most important international strategic actors for the international professionally oriented cooperation in Europe. However, the strategic partners vary from faculty to faculty.

"Each faculty has its own strategic actors, normally three of them, so that they get to know them better and have more quality control as to how they collaborate together, etc. So it has been a general institutional trend" (H03).

As HiOA is a professionally oriented HEI, the faculties and departments are self-sufficient in terms of choosing their own international focus arena, partners and activities (H01, H03).

"We have a list [of strategic partners]. We follow the national policies and we try to spread them around" (H04).

First, the international cooperation at HiOA (OUC/AUC) started off with the collaboration with the strategic partners in the Nordic region. Nordic cooperation in HE has a long tradition (Maassen et al., 2008). In the eyes of one interviewee, in this way it was easier, inexpensive and timesaving to conduct the research as Nordic countries geographically, culturally and linguistically closer to each, therefore it was not necessary to use English (H04). These days HiOA's international cooperation is particularly focused on Europe and actualized by the Erasmus+ program that is offering funding to the strategic partnerships. All the interviewees referred that the particular focus on the strategic collaborations HiOA sets not only for Europe and Nordic countries, but also towards an active cooperation with the USA, Canada, Australia, Russia, China, India and a number of the selected countries in Latin America²⁸ and Africa (H04). "The reason for collaborating is to become better internationalized!" (H04).

²⁸ Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico

Taking the Faculty of Education and International Studies as an example, next year (2016) a substantial faculty project in collaboration with Russia will be carried out including the four departments²⁹ within the faculty (H04); moreover, the faculty collaborates with the Asian countries and has very strong relations with African HEIs³⁰, which are the most popular destination among the students who go on exchange within the faculty (H04).

Some of the challenges in strategic cooperation as to one of the respondent is that the organizational structure (institution, department, faculty) need to work best together for various forms of the strategic cooperation, and the way “normal” cooperation can better be developed in order to become the strategic one (H02). Several interviewees referred that the new leadership at HiOA (starting from August 2015) sets the goal on continuing to develop strategic partnerships with the prioritized partner institutions that are seen beneficial to enhance the quality of internationalization at the college (H01, H03).

Internationalization among students and staff. According to the action plan (HiOA, 2014a) and the White paper on internationalization (Report no. 14 to the Storting, (2008-2009)), one of HiOA’s objectives is that students and staff should be given an opportunity for international experience as the part of their education. This can be realized through the extensive, well-developed study offers, internships or projects abroad, and also through internationalization at home (H02). As of now (2015), HiOA offers courses in English at all levels, including four master degree programs. Besides, the action plan states the college’s involvement into three joint degree programs; moreover, it has teamed up for student exchange with around 340 HEIs worldwide (HiOA, 2014a). That means that students within various disciplines and faculties are offered training abroad as an integral part of their studies (H02). Student admission in 2014 was at 229 international students at all levels³¹. To ensure that HiOA has smooth and efficient recruitment process, it was indicated that the last years HiOA has actively been working on the international staff recruitment, as it is mandatory within both academic and administrative positions. Not to mention that HiOA has signed the agreement with international recruitment services to increase college's profiling as an attractive work place and attract more candidates with the expertise (H01). To support the concept, the career page in English was also built up that will handle the process from

²⁹ Early Childhood Education; Primary and Secondary Teacher Education; International Studies and Interpreting; Vocational Teacher Education

³⁰ University of Cape Town; Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University; University of Western Cape

³¹ For more facts and numbers see tables 7-8

attraction to the recruiting and retaining candidates from other countries (H02).

Internationalizing academics is in general part of a traditional policy for internationalization (Report No. 14 (2008-2009: 14)). The recruitment of international staff is now one of the priorities at HiOA (H01, H02). Due to the fact that a massive retirement process is taking place at HiOA (as there are a number of staff in the retirement age), these days and in the nearest future a lot free academic positions need to be occupied within the faculties (H02). For that reason, the strong focus has been set at recruiting international staff preferably those who hold a PhD degree, as well as candidates with solid international experience will have preference. The central HR department has appointed a person with a full time employment responsible merely for recruiting international staff (H01). It is believed that on one hand having the international staff will considerably influence the way HiOA's employees at different levels perceive and approach internationalization both intrinsically and as strategic policy area (H01). On the other hand, the new staff that has already been recruited starting from 2011 and the newcomer ones will only know HiOA as the whole, cohesive organization, contrastingly to those who have been working at the pre-merger colleges (OUC and AUC) and now continue working at HiOA (H02). In the eyes of the interviewees, the newly hired employees (since 2011 and further on) will have a completely different mind-set and interpretation towards internationalization as to those who have been employed at OUC, AUC and eventually HiOA for an inordinate length of time, prior to the merger and after it (H02). The data shows that staff's interest in internationalization comes chiefly from individuals with direct international experience, or those who involved into activity either on campus, i.e. with international students, or research or collaboration with the other countries (H01, H02, H03).

Research. When inquired about HiOA's research-related activities and the linkage to internationalization, the statement was that the leadership has set a goal to be an international leader in professional education with expertise on international level (H03). A lot of institutions in Norway are focused to a great extent that education needs to be research-based (H01). This requires that the college successfully attracts and retains internationally outstanding researchers, publish regularly in the best international journals and - preferably together with international partners - assert itself in the competition for international research projects and assets. That is seen as the way for HiOA and international office (IO) to tie together master, research and PhD levels in order to strengthen master degree programs and to have a clear plan as to attracting better students for the courses (H02). In that way research

is considered as the linking instrument. The section for Research and Development together with IO initiated the participation in HORIZON 2020 program. The purpose was to obtain adequate funding that could justify the collaboration with other HEIs in and outside Europe (H03).

International reputation. In the process of the document analysis number of implications show that HiOA attempts to build up and further develop its international orientation, position and vision by strengthening its international visibility and reputation in the international arena. Key instruments reflected by the most respondents are seen by profiling and dissemination of institution's professional activities, as well as the application of scientific staff, students and future alumni as distinguished representatives for college abroad (H03, H02). In that way HiOA benefits from its participation in strategic partnerships with the number of selected institutions abroad. The college has improved in these areas, but yet has a significant potential for increased international recognition.

When inquired about the development process of the succeeding strategic plan for internationalization, the respondents often referred to international office. The team has already started work on developing more detailed and comprehensive of the action plan for internationalization for the next time frame (H01). The preliminary aim is to make the infrastructure with respect to internationalization more efficient and well organized within the whole institution (H01, H02). It has also been mentioned that the new action plan expected to be developed in cooperation with the new leadership starting from August 2015 that is believed will provide more specific direction for internationalization work at HiOA (H01).

5.4 HiOA's international cooperation in education and research

As part of HiOA's participation in Erasmus+ program in 2013 Erasmus Policy Statement was introduced. The document describes HiOA's general strategy, objectives and priorities for the institution's activities within the various parts of the Erasmus program. As explained by the respondent, EU set the requirement that the whole document needed to be published on HiOA's website. The objective is that the staff within the institution could be able to easily familiarize themselves with the document and follow the degree of goal achievement over

time. In the policy statement, HiOA stresses the importance of internationalization of research activities: “knowledge must be brought from abroad”, “internationalization is a condition to enhance the quality of education” (Erasmus Policy Statement, HiOA). The Action Plan for Internationalization for 2014 – 2017 prioritizes the following steps (Erasmus Policy statement, HiOA): a) strengthening the strategic cooperation with a selected number of universities of applied sciences; b) prioritize cooperation with Nordic countries and Europe, but also cooperate with USA, Russia, China, India and selected countries in Latin America and Africa; c) support the development of joint degrees with international partners; d) develop more courses taught in English; e) make all information on HiOA’s website accessible in English; f) increase student mobility; j) exchange and integration of international researchers among the academic staff; and finally to provide language courses for students and staff as part of competence enhancement.

The national priority is to send students to countries where Norway has its commercial interests. In case of HiOA Germany and the Netherlands are the most expedient partners for the time being (H03). In addition, in 2014 HiOA has carried out 300 bilateral agreements with Europe, of which 37 are found in Germany³² (Erasmus Policy Statement, HiOA). The university college is involved in number of national and international projects. According to SIU, this includes the following programs: a) Erasmus+ program for 2014 – 2020; b) UTFORSK partnership program – the program for strengthening the linkage between HE and research in international collaboration, and increasing Nordic cooperation with BRICS countries (Brasil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) + Japan; c) Science Without Borders (SwB) – mobility program mainly within STEM fields offering scholarships to Brazilian students at different levels³³ to study in Norway; d) North American partnership program – the program for increased cooperation between Norwegian and North American HEIs that supports academically based cooperation, aiming at long-term institutional partnership relations between Canada and the USA; e) International joint degree programs at master and PhD level, identified by Norwegian Ministry of Education as a priority in the future internationalization of HE (SIU, 2014). The above-mentioned programs are also prioritized by Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU).

32 Erasmus Policy Statement – Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Part D of application for ECHE 2014) <http://www.hioa.no/Om-HiOA/Internasjonalt-utvalg>

³³ undergraduate, PhD and postdoc

6 Findings and Discussion

This chapter provides the discussion and analysis of the findings from the study. The analysis of the findings in relation to the research questions will be done in this chapter as a way of understanding the concepts that have been discussed earlier in this thesis. First, the analysis of the outcomes of the findings will be laid out before the discussion delves into the relationship between the findings and concepts from the literature reviewed and analytical framework.

6.1 Environmental and external influence

This section addresses the second research question “(2) *To what extent has the developments in the institutional environment contributed to making internationalization into a strategic policy area? And how, if so, has HiOA responded to it?*”. The idea is to assess how the newly merged HiOA is handling the development, expectations and demands in its environment, which is being delved and discussed by the end of the chapter (section 6.1.1).

As discussed in Chapter 3, HiOA must be responsive to its environment, and those responses have had profound effects on its internationalization structures and processes. When looking into the environment that influences internationalization strategic area at HiOA, one can distinguish between the following types of the institutional environment: a) the international environment (EU policies, EU mobility and research projects, Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, international cooperation); b) the national environment (the incentives from the government, the Ministry of Education, Quality Reform, White Paper to the Storting 2008-2009, SIU). According to the interview and document data, both the international and national regulative environments shape the way internationalization is being organized in the university college (H03, H01).

The external actors that influenced HiOA’s internationalization policies defined as the EU research- and mobility programs and the Norwegian Quality Reform. Those perceived to be significant players when analyzing important background information for the institution’s goals of internationalization (see section 6.1). EU frameworks also play a significant role to HiOA’s internationalization policies (H01, H03). Nevertheless, it seems that the EU

framework is merely important for HiOA in terms of accepting the incoming students. The Norwegian students financially supported by the Norwegian State loan fund, so they choose themselves which country they prefer to study (H03, H04). In this way, the regulations that are coming from Europe are mostly considered to have impact on the funding area and student mobility policy of the organization:

“EU has a lot to say. It’s like a chain reaction. The Ministry of Education follows the EU guidelines, and then SIU tries to connect onto that...” (H03).

When it comes to SIU, two of the interviewees expressed the opinion that the center for international cooperation has very little power and impact on HEIs in Norway (H01, H03). Somewhat surprisingly one informant assumes that the center could be shut down:

“SIU doesn’t affect doesn’t change anything. They [SIU] have very little money, very obscure programs. Institutions do whatever they want anyway”.

The bilateral agreements SIU has with the BRIC countries do not bring sufficient funding, therefore HEIs are capable to do what the leaderships think is the right choice for the institution (H03). However, it was stressed that EU mobility and research programs are important for the whole institution in a way to attract additional financial support.

When inquired about to which extent the Norwegian government has control over the HiOA’s international activities, one respondent argued that even though the certain incentives are coming from the government, yet HiOA has its autonomy to make the decisions with respect to international cooperation with other countries or institutions (H03).

“I don’t perceive that any framework or guideline comes from the government on internationalization” (H03).

However, in this regard the other respondent expressed another opinion:

“There are clear signals where the government would like us to work and where they would like us to focus” (H01)

With this in mind, HiOA’s ambition to achieve university status is also to a great extent linked to environment, namely to the Quality Reform (see section 2.3.1). Apart from the structural change of the degree structure and increased internationalization, the Quality Reform (QR) has also led to new governing forms, including a new funding system of HE

and, correspondingly, to the new funding system of internationalization where student mobility is seen as one of the sources of income (H03). The QR suggested a link around internationalization where there is a strong belief that HEI not “solely” university. Universities operate in a global international setting; therefore, internationalization is perceived to be an important framework condition for operation. Therefore, the internationalization expectations at HiOA are absolutely there.

HiOA’s vigorous intention to achieve university status (with an ambition to submit an application for university accreditation during spring 2016³⁴) can be interpreted as a certain response/result to the outcomes of the Quality Reform – that is also stated in the institutional strategic plan 2020 (Strtegy2020) and the strategy for achieving university status³⁵. Another respondent mentioned that there were several debates where the attempts to formulate another name were made, although they had not achieved the status yet (H03). Several informants pointed out the importance in becoming university, as the term “university college” is unfamiliar abroad and seen as an obstacle to the international development of the institution (H03). At the same time, respondents also admit that seeking university status is a rather costly strategy that demands substantial resources and efforts as to upgrading staff, educational programs, etc. to the required level (H03, H04). Notwithstanding, there are considerable expectations of future financial benefits, increasing focus on research-based activities and international cooperation (H02, H03). When funding follows these political signals, the focus of both teachers and academics is directed, as they strive to be involved into international projects and cooperate with the EU.

“Norway has a very strong focus on EU... there are clear signals from the government that we [HiOA] need to increase both in research and education and we need to be more active in cooperation with the EU” (H01)

However, two respondents, from the top leadership and from the IO team, reflected critically as to HiOA needs to report to the Ministry of Education as to the number of incoming and outgoing students.

“It’s very old-fashioned way that we report the number of incoming and outgoing students. We should have different parameters, even though it’s quite challenging. We could discuss this in terms of how much one could quantify the international learning

³⁴ <http://khrono.no/campus/2015/09/vil-levere-soknad-universitet-varen-2016>

³⁵ Strategi for universitetssatsing: http://www.hioa.no/Mediabiblioteket/node_52/node_1507/Strategi-for-universitetssatsing

outcomes of students. It's not easy, but it would be nice to think a bit different about it" (H03).

At the same time the informants have a strong focus on increasing the student mobility programs, and the number of international students.

"The number of students coming in and going out is something that is easy to measure, and if we drop on those successive years, we can feel the pressure to raise those numbers again" (H02)

The national environment of HiOA is influenced by its strategic partnerships and collaborations, the overall student mobility, establishment of the study programs in English, participation in the research projects (H01, H02). When looking at establishing courses and programs taught in English, the perceptions of the key actors at the institutional level are that it is to an extent influenced by national policy. Student mobility has also become more important as national authorities have attached funding schemes to it.

Thus, it could be argued that there are number of expectations and demands from the government and the Ministry of Education as to HEIs. The EU's policies, initiatives and other processes through national government regulations and policies directly or indirectly are putting pressures on HEIs in order to "homogenize" their educational delivery. The national Quality Reform (2003) to a large extent emphasized student mobility through formal agreements and strategic partnerships established at HiOA and the institution follows the rules and accepts norms (Oliver, 19991). An interesting observation is that most respondents consider cooperation with the research council of Norway as a certain instrument to increase the quality of research and education (H03). This explains the reason how the environment the institution is located in, influences HiOA's engagement into international activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that both the EU policies and the national regulations have a strong linkage and impact on the way internationalization policy is developing at HiOA.

6.1.1 Impact of the merger

There are number of aspects in regard to internationalization at HiOA that are not functioning optimally. The challenge for HiOA for the time being is to find out what internationalization of education means for this specific institution:

"How can we [HiOA as the organization] develop internationalization in a way that it's good for us, that we reach the goals that we have to accomplish in the rest of our strategy?" (H01)

Taking into consideration that HiOA is relatively new since it has started its operation as one organization, it has been mentioned that both the institutional and faculty level struggling as to how to find the right balance among different internationalization interests and opportunities that need to be taken into consideration.

"Internationalization really came in with the Quality Reform in 2003, and... it's difficult to manage the whole range of things that need to be done in order to succeed with it" (H04).

One reason is that the strategic policy area of internationalization was not given the attention it should have during the merger process. It was not part of it all.

"It's very easy to say that HiOA wants to become a leading international professional university. But how do you become that? How do you follow up on the strategies?" (H04)

The findings indicate that one of the biggest challenges is first, to follow up on the internationalization strategies, second, to have them on all levels and third, not to lose sight of them (H01, H04). To interpret these findings, it could be argued that HiOA is facing the above-mentioned challenges. One of the reasons is that the institution underwent merger process four years ago, thus, it is still possible to see merger's result when it comes to internationalization as a strategic policy area. One reason is that internationalization has not received the attention it should have received during the merger, as internationalization was simply not prioritized at that point. Therefore, at this point of time it is challenging for HiOA to think as a coherent organization when it comes to internationalization, communication, marketing, recruitment, etc.

"We just need to find a balance, as those forces trying to pull both ways" (H01).

HiOA needs better cooperation and the communication within the faculties, as they have become the core organizational units with relatively strong, autonomous central leadership and administrative structure. Admittedly, faculties need to develop their own vision of internationalization and the way it relates to the role of central administration. Therefore, it is crucial both to build the strong institutional identity and sub-selling the institution outward

and find the balance between those:

“The leadership of HiOA focuses on being one institution. And the other staff need to feel in their hearts that they are now the part of HiOA, not the old OUC nor the school of nursing/ journalism” (H01).

As one of the informants emphasized that the merger took a vast amount of time, energy and effort from all the partakers, it was challenging to formalize one institution after two organizations with slightly cultures and views on internationalization (H04) (see chapter 6.3). Contrastingly, it was stated that merger did not affect internationalization aspect of the new institution (H03). However, this data must be interpreted with the caution, as one of the favorable effects the merger had on internationalization is that the new institution’s infrastructure has been noticeably strengthened. As the college became a much bigger HEI, Kjeller campus in particular benefited from the infrastructure that came from the old OUC. Eventually, HiOA had better administrative support for internationalization as it was before. For researchers the two libraries have been put together; AFI&NOVA is one of the main sources for obtaining, subscription to more scientific journals – everyone has much bigger availability. That is very important point (H03).

The findings indicate that merger in general for the whole institution perceived to be very successful (H01, H02, H03, H04). Yet two departments at the faculty of health sciences are being reorganized at the moment (as of summer 2015).

6.2 Development of Internationalization Policy Area

This section aims to provide the answer to the research question “(3) *How internationalization as a strategic policy has area been handled within HiOA?*”. The question is divided into the following sub-categories: governance, organization and funding allocation in regard to internationalization as a strategic policy area at HiOA. First, the constituents involved into creating internationalization strategic policy area will be discussed (section 6.2.1). The issue of managing internationalization is discussed at three levels; the overall responsibility for internationalization, the senior staff structure and the involvement and role of the International Office. Next, the reflections on organization of the internationalization efforts and the ways of mobilizing directions for developing

internationalization strategic policy area at HiOA will be examined (section 6.2.2). Finally, the funding dimension in supporting internationalization is being clarified (section 6.2.3).

6.2.1 Constituents involved in the development of internationalization as a strategic policy area

The internationalization at HiOA is characterized by the influence of the following important actors at different levels: from institutional leadership as rectors and the heads of the university college administration, to senior academic and administrative managers. These actors are the key players when it comes to defining the way if internationalization is to be taken seriously as a strategic priority and if resources are to be appropriately allocated and employed around internationalization. Needless to say, the commitment of an internationally oriented leadership emphasizes that internationalization needs to be a part of an overall strategy of the university college (H03); it also reinforces the legitimacy of internationalization and allows for it to be engaged and taken into consideration in overall decision-making for the institution.

The leadership of HiOA, namely the pro-rector for R&D and internationalization, together with the administrative coordinators, i.e. the international office, facilitate internationalization within the university college. As claimed by several respondents, institution-level leadership at HiOA, (i.e. the governing body) is in control both for high-level management when it comes to internationalization strategies and policies as well as for assessing possible challenges and opportunities the institution might face (H03, H01). Admittedly, the support of senior administrators is also crucial to successful internationalization (H03).

The pro-rector for the research and internationalization and the International office have the principal responsibility for designing and developing international strategic policy on the institutional level, however building the partnerships among the countries where Norway has commercial interests is normally developed at the faculty level, as different faculties have different strategic partners for cooperation (H04). The pro-rector for R&D and internationalization, who is also the rector's³⁶ legal representative, has the principal academic leadership responsibilities over internationalization. He has been very active in formulating

³⁶ As of 2011-2015 the rector of HiOA was a female

and initiating new initiatives for internationalization both at the national and international level. He has also initiated investigation and analysis of the strategic choices for internationalization at HiOA by the committee of the representatives from European Association for International Education (EAIE) in May 2013. The intention behind was to generate more interest and engage HiOA's students and staff into internationalization (H03). EAIE's investigation was first and foremost directed at senior academic- and administrative leaders involved in the development and carrying out of internationalization strategies at HiOA (EAIE, 2013). The goal of the evaluation was to assess HiOA's policy statements with respect to internationalization expressed in the institutional documents and further, to compare it to internationalization practices of the university college, i.e. data gather from the interviews. The report illustrates a gap between HiOA's ambitions, as they are presented in the Strategy 2020 and policy documents, and the understanding of the concept of internationalization among the university college employees. Provided that, an importance of holistic internationalization strategies where all the staff at HiOA is informed and engaged into it is highlighted. Furthermore, the importance of clear mechanisms for information sharing across faculties and departments, and that "one size fits all the policy" should be avoided as each of the four faculties may have different needs and capacities for internationalization. This applies particularly to outgoing and incoming students. Finally, it has been recommended that HiOA needs to develop a clear, common understanding of the concept of internationalization (EAIE, 2013).

When asked about the actors involved in the internationalization policy area at HiOA, all the interviewees referred to the International Committee at HiOA [Internasjonalt Utvalg], a central committee at the institutional level that has the main responsibility for the strategic issues related to internationalization. The committee develops proposals for the international strategy, i.e. action plans for internationalization, and further, follows up the implementation of it (H01, H04). The rector had the authority to appoint members of the committee that consisted of ten members: pro-rector for R&D and internationalization - the leader of the committee, one representative from each faculty (pro-deans who have internationalization as their area of responsibility), two experts in the area of HE with the broad experience in internationalization; two students representatives and an external representative (normally from UiO). The head of international office was the secretary for the committee. The International Committee used to meet six times per year in order to have discussions around internationalization of education (H01). However, the committee did not take any decisions,

it only performed as an advisory body and gave recommendations to the institutional leadership on strategic issues on internationalization efforts. The leadership in its turn had the right to come to a decision whether to follow the given recommendations or not (H01, H03).

Within the university college, the International Committee has mainly been perceived as a driving force for internationalization (HiOA: Sak 13-2014). The committee had three main functions: a) to advice the rector in relation to international dimension of the university college; b) to monitor the development of internationalization by participating in hearings and evaluations internally and externally; c) to put forward institutional initiatives in planning an annual budget with respect to internationalization (H01, H03). By the same token, in order to fulfill the role as a strategic and coordinating body, the Committee's task was to keep an active dialogue with the faculties and departments, where communications were expected to go both ways (H02).

At the time of conducting the empirical research for the case study (May - June 2015), HiOA was going through structural changes on institutional level where the question of going from divided model to unified model leadership was under discussion and the structure of the committees was also changing (H01; H02; H03). HiOA is trying to follow the recommendations by an independent research organization (NIFU) that evaluated the organizational structure of the university college in 2014. It has been recommended that HiOA needs to have a more unified way of thinking as one comprehensive university college with fewer committees (Lekve et al. 2014a, 2014b). A slight disbelief to this statement came from one of the respondent "... nice in theory, but I am unsure if that will work" (H03). In retrospect, it is perhaps more accurate to say that even four years after the merger between the two colleges was formalized, it is still to an extent challenging for HiOA to think as a coherent institution when it comes to internationalization, communication, marketing, recruitment, etc., as after the merger all these aspects are not the same as it used to be in the two university colleges OUC and AUC before the merger took place. However, in the eyes of the another respondent, these things getting better with the time even though it takes time to think like a unified institution and unlike to a small department or office (H02).

Of particular interest are changes with respect to the International Committee. One of the topics on the agenda was the termination of the committee's operation. A general agreement

has been approved that from the 1st of august 2015 the operation of the advisory Committee will be discontinued (H01, H03). The final meeting was held on the 4th of June 2015 (H03). Several of the interviewees acknowledged that the closure of the Committee was the right and favorable decision (H03). One of the reasons was that the Committee did not have an impact on internationalization as it was expected. It is the internal problem when it comes to the way it was organized (H03). Another reason is that it did not have the real mandate (H01), as expressed by one of the respondent "...if one wants to run a successful committee, one needs to have the actual power to do that" (H03). Hence, as the Committee was merely entitled an advisory role to the leadership, the closure could have been avoided if it had an authority to take the decisions on the issues related to internationalization activities (H03). Thus, the above-mentioned situation to an extent impact internationalization governance within the institution. It can be argued that due to that fact HiOA's internationalization plan is now fully "institutionalized".

Another aspect that comes out of the interviews pertains the matters the institutional governing actors are considered to address, i.e. the practical choice of international strategic agreements, academic quality with regard to international collaboration, student's objectives and outcomes with respect to the internationalization strategy of the university college and how successfully the institution positions itself in achieving those (H04). Last but not the least highlighted by one of the respondent was the compliance to the requirements, regulations and incentives from the national government (H01, H03).

Another interesting fact to consider is that all of the respondents mentioned that internationalization strategic policy area at HiOA is still under its development (H01, H04); therefore, when the new rector will take over the leadership role from August 2015, the new leadership and the Board will take this topic up and decide how internationalization will further be handled within the organization (H01, H03). The plan is that all the questions related to internationalization issues should be managed in a more strategic committee that would deal with all the strategic matters at HiOA (H03). That means that questions within education, research for the institute's internationalization, all the other strategic areas would fight for the attention at this committee. According to one of the respondent, there is a belief that shortly after that might be the International office's role together with the international

staff at the faculties to validate that internationalization is kept in the focus and that it is not supplanted by the other areas of interest within the college (H03). Given these facts, both the considerable commitment expressed in written policy, i.e. the action plan for internationalization as well as insufficient commitment revealed through the genuine interest in internationalization expressed by senior administrators are the important elements that contribute to diversity, multiculturalism and the international society, the three important priority areas of the institutional Strategy 2020 that will foster HiOA to become an internationally recognized cooperation partner for the other institutions world wide and in addition have a positive effect on the Norwegian society (Strategy 2020).

6.2.2 Organization of internationalization as a strategic policy area

The aim of this section is to provide the reflections on organization of the international activities with respect to both research and education at HiOA. As HiOA is moving towards creating a new internationalization policy document at the moment (H01) (2015), this section offers an insight on the over the organizational parts of internationalization effort at HiOA and the ways of mobilizing directions for developing internationalization strategic policy area at the university college.

The International office

As HiOA is a result of the merger of the two separate university colleges (OUC and AUC), it has merged two different international practices into one as both colleges used to have actively operating international offices (see Chapter 5). Combination of the relatively two old formal structures related also to international practices (H04). Thence, being a lately merged institution, HiOA has had an advantage of a fresh start when it comes to internationalization strategic policy area. In order to formalize HiOA's international relations, the international office (IO) was established as part of the Department of Academic Affairs, Educational Quality and Internationalization in the central administration until 2014. Since 2015 the Department was repositioned under the authority of the pro-rector of Education (see Appendix 3).

When inquired about the position of the international office at HiOA, most of the respondents indicated that the IO is viewed as a catalyst for institutional change that supports and

facilitates internationalization within the institution, namely:

"... International section is seen as an ambassador for the good things for the internationalization within the organization" (H01).

The IO consists of 10-12 people within the section; however, there are both administrative coordinators and academic coordinators at each of the four faculties within the organization working with the issues of internationalization. The IO team devotes a vast amount of time coordinating the activities among the faculties

"... As we are only 10 people here [at the international office], we can't be fully responsible for internationalization of education at HiOA, therefore the colleagues at all the faculties are very important collaborators for us to work together with in the area of internationalization" (H01).

In this way both active and passive monitoring of activities is important in preserving the complete integrity and capability in international work (H02). For that reason, the section for internationalization is exerting certain pressures on the faculty/department level for internationalizing teaching and learning. At the same time it focuses attention on research, which most of the respondents consider to be the prevalent trait in internationalization (H01, H03, H04). During the interview analysis it has become apparent that HiOA concedes international activities to be moderately driven by both academic and research staff (H02).

While examining key functions of the IO one can follow the pattern of how the changes in the college's external environment influence the way internationalization itself changes and develops at the institutional level. Findings indicate that the majority of respondents felt that the main functions of the IO can be classified as development, cooperation and reporting. First, planning and facilitation for promoting increased student mobility, development of exchange agreements with HEIs considered important to HiOA and provide advising for decision-making bodies and leadership as to student mobility. Second, the section for internationalization is accountable for assisting faculties, departments and study programs concerning development of part-time studies abroad, information and supervising students who want to study abroad through the formal- and bilateral agreements concluded by HiOA. Third, the IO unit is in control for recruiting the international students to HiOA, it provides information and advising for incoming students before coming on exchange to Oslo (H01, H02, H03, H04). Last, but certainly not the least, IO deals with housing, applications, visa procedures and Norwegian language courses for incoming international students. The office

is situated in the same building as the central university college rectorate and administration, which is also seen as an advantage for the students as the office is easily accessible (H02).

Furthermore, the IO is seen as a responsible key actor for the development, coordination and establishment of new formal agreements and student mobility in bilateral agreements (H02). The international office team manages the EU research strategic partners and participates in international programs, i.e. in collaboration with BRIC countries, ERASMUS+ agreements, NORHED program, etc.). The same goes for participation in NORDPLUS program for the Nordic countries. In other words, as one of the representatives from the institutional leadership corroborated

“... the international office does all the practical things, and the institutional leadership discusses and deal with the policy, and take the decisions as to how the things need to be done” (H03).

An interesting issue emerging from the findings is that one of the respondents with the experience of working at AUC previously to the merger, expressed the opinion that in a form of the two separate university colleges, internationalization had a much stronger hold at old AUC than at OUC which, according to the interviewee, had much more old-fashioned organization which is currently present at HiOA since the merger (H04). It was also mentioned that the working group for internationalization functioning throughout the pre-merger period (2008-2011) agreed upon that they would like the new institution (HiOA) to have the organizational structure similar to the old AUC, as it was before the merger (H04). However, according to the interviewee, the top leadership eventually disregarded the appeal. Contrastingly, the decision was taken in favor of the current organizational structure of the university college (H04) (see Appendix 3). This could be one of the factors that influenced the way that HiOA is for the time being in the process of reorganizing its internationalization strategic policy area at the institutional level. Another supposition is that the organization is to an extent young enough and the innovation and the implementation of its internationalization policy is still under development.

Investigating and analyzing the strategic choices for internationalization at HiOA within the action plans for internationalization (see section 5.3), and taking into consideration that HiOA is moving towards creating a new internationalization policy at the moment (H01), the following conclusions can be drawn.

HiOA is aiming at achieving university status (which is perceived to be the ultimate goal of the merger), which can increase its participation, recognition and importance in national and international knowledge networks. This might be a focal point as it is the goal, which HiOA is actively working for at the moment (as of 2015) (H03). In this regard, it can be argued that internationalization serves as an instrument for facilitating HiOA with the goal to become a university.

The possibility of taking an education program abroad is seen as one of the benefits in the national context. HiOA is strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation by following up the Europe 2020 target. The focus is set on increasing the number of students (up to 20%) who successfully complete HE (a study or training period) abroad by 2020. The Norwegian adoption of the aims of the Bologna has assisted cross-border cooperation. For example, according to HiOA's Erasmus Policy statement (2013), the two EMMPs have indicated a significant increase in student mobility, contributed to attraction skilled students, academics and researchers from countries outside the EU, thus contributing to European competitiveness.

Another point is that OUC has merged with AUC, which before the merger was in a close cooperation with local regional enterprises and businesses. Next, in 2014 HiOA merged with two research centers: AFI and NOVA. Hence, Clark's triangle model of coordination (1983) "education, research and business" is constantly being strengthened and improved. In its way, HiOA's increased diversity and increased commitment makes the university college an attractive partner for collaboration with respect to international context. More precisely, it will improve college's ability to fully take advantage of the Erasmus program. Important to mention that HiOA was receiving financing from international programs, including Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus and EU's Program for Research. In addition, EEA grants represent also a decent source of funding (Erasmus Policy statement).

Internationalization at Home

This section helps us to understand the development of the overall internationalization as a strategic policy area at HiOA, as IaH looking at the core of the overall internationalization. That is one of the reasons why it needs to be examined and discussed. Moreover, when investigating the way internationalization policies are organized at HiOA, it was also noted

that most of the informants referred a lot to the concept “internationalization at home” (IaH). Particularly the importance of attracting foreign academic staff and researchers with the aim to increase internationalization within the college was underlined. Nevertheless, attracting foreign staff and students is only one of a number of activities related to IaH. In this manner, one of the informants emphasized that building a proportion of courses in English on both Bachelor and Master level is one of the major tasks at HiOA (H02). HiOA has currently four masters programs taught in English and starting from autumn 2016 five international master’s degree programs³⁷ will be offered for international applicants (H02). It was also mentioned that HiOA has currently no overall strategy for IaH. However, it was explained that during the last two years the integration of IaH was particularly brought into focus (H02). That has been done in the various ways. First, study programs on each of four faculties offer courses in English. All together, around 56 courses on Bachelor and 25 on Master levels are taught in English³⁸. In retrospect, one respondent acknowledged that not all disciplines are inherently international yet (H03). Second, the IO together with the student parliament at HiOA incorporated a number of social and sports activities on campus where both Norwegian and international students can be mixed and integrated. The buddy system was established to ease students’ transition when arriving to HiOA, to provide new international students assistance in finding their way around and settling down quicker. The language café [Språkkafe] is believed to be a positive pastime for both international and Norwegian students, which provides an opportunity to practice languages and make friends (H02). Next, from autumn 2015 it was also planned to arrange an introductory course expected to run for the whole semester for master degree international students. The aim is to provide them with academic guiding on how to understand Norwegian HE system from an academic perspective, to shed light on the institution’s academic expectations of students’ work and progression from the teachers. Notwithstanding, the interviewee emphasized that they face number of challenges, as the majority of the Norwegian students have already their established network. Therefore the interpretation of the whole idea was interpreted as follows:

“Internationalization at home is a long a hard road, that’s for sure!” (H02)

This response can be interpreted in a way that the Norwegian government deliberately

³⁷ International Social Welfare and Policy; Multicultural and International Education; Network and System Administration; Product Design; Universal Design of ICT

³⁸ <http://www.hioa.no/eng/Studies/Search-for-Courses-Taught-in-English>

stimulated study abroad instead of creating new facilities for international students at home (Hernes Commission, 1988). As it was mentioned earlier in this chapter, apart from including the inbound students' integration at campus, the IO provides active support for incoming students in terms of creating the websites, information and policy documents available in English, etc. In the words of one interviewee:

"The plan for the current year [2015] is to create the webpage connected to the section of internationalization that will be the resource page devoted to internationalization at home" (H01).

However, introducing of this concept is seen as a challenge. As HiOA's staff participating in international conferences, the tendency is that most of HEIs in Europe are struggling to find out whether it is necessary or not to put into practice this concept (H01). To accomplish this goal both academic and administrative staff at HiOA needs to be involved and work on it.

Overall, respondents expressed that internationalization of HiOA's campus and the attraction of international students is the prerequisite not only for internationalization in general but also for international research and academic collaboration (H01). There are possible explanations to this statement. For example HiOA's attempt to internationalize the campus can be seen as the influence first and foremost by the Quality Reform. Therefore all the respondents highlight the importance to continue developing and promotion of the above-mentioned activities.

Internationalization at home (IaH) or the newer term "internationalization of the curriculum" (IoC) turns focus to what is becoming more central at HiOA, namely form activities such as student competencies in terms of internationalization. An internationalized curriculum aims to engage students into international research and cultural linguistic diversity. The purpose is to develop their intercultural and international perspectives as global professionals through their studies – no matter whether they are travelling on exchange or not. Many students at HiOA for various reasons do not have an opportunity to travel on exchange studies abroad (HiOA, 2014). Activities that provide "internationalization at home" are, therefore, of great importance to provide also this group of students' international experiences.

6.2.3 Sources of Funding for Internationalization

In terms of this case study, the funding dimension is considered to be one of the essential resources linked to internationalization, as it is the considerable resource the institution dependent on. It has been found that that the general funds allocated to the institution to support internationalization activities predominantly derive from the following actors:

a) The Norwegian government is the main and basic resource allocation, meaning that the amount received by HiOA sets up to an extent certain expectations, predictability and to a certain degree guarantees the accomplishment the number of priorities. i.e. advancement of certain practices of internationalization, international considerations, etc. (H03);

b) A student-based sum based on credits and the number of graduates:

“... we [HiOA] receive the basic funding from the state and then the additional money is based on the students participating in the programs and the amount of study points taken by them” (H01)

c) Strategic allocations based on the national priorities and institutional strategies:

“A lot of funding coming from SIU which has funding programs with different parts of the world... BRICS countries, North America and the countries the government would like us [HiOA] to cooperate with” (H01).

“... we [HiOA] are very much involved into the EU funding, the ERASMUS+ projects, HORIZON 2020 ... yes, that’s a very important part” (H03).

Allocations made to support international activities at HiOA have been active in searching for external funding in order to finance international activities. As of 2015, the goal of HiOA’s new leadership to make HiOA an international institution, it is interesting to follow the way certain sources of funding have been changing annually starting from 2011, the year the merger between OUC and AUC was formalized. This has also been reflected in HiOA’s general budget as the part of the funds is also directed on internationalization activities (see Table 8).

Table 7: Financial Resources at HiOA

	2011	2012	2013	2014
State Funding	1 593 851	1 603 962	1 762 737	1 883 750
Funding from EU Research Framework programs	9 551	-4 511	-85	4 119
Funding from Norwegian Research Council	24 867	22 350	19 354	55 507
Operating income – total NOK	1 761 223	1 724 243	1 897 806	2 110 470

Source (DBH)

The results show that HiOA sees the various financial resources available for

internationalization as a vital tool (H01, H02, H04). This can be explained by the fact that grants and scholarships significantly increase the number of mobile students and initiates new mobility schemes that eventually brings more financial resources to the college. The lack of funding was addressed as the external condition in terms of internationalization. The reason is that HiOA spends a lot of financial resources by sending students out, thus there is an assumption that it is more lucrative for the institution rather to have the incoming students (H03). As discussed previously, HEIs in Norway with the exception for a few private institutions are funded by the state. Nevertheless, the additional and external sources of funding are crucial for internationalization activities in HiOA, as it helps to facilitate internationalization both internally and externally (H03). HiOA receives this funding from a range of international projects, funding schemes, etc.: Erasmus+, SIU, EU's Framework Program for Research, Research Council of Norway, HORIZON 2020, EEA grants, Nordfrosk, Nordplus, etc.

Turning now to HiOA's participation in the above-mentioned projects, two of the respondents stated that a vast amount of time is devoted to the preparation of project applications, whereof many are selected, accordingly those have a substantial impact on the institution's funding also when it comes to internationalization activities (H01). When it comes to EEA and scholarship grants, HiOA considers those to be a significant source of funding. The reason is that receiving foreign staff and students through the framework of EEA results in generous funding for the host institution (H03). It has also been stressed that countries such as China, India, and Brazil are investing heavily not only into HiOA's education and research field but also as part of Norway's national growth strategies (H01).

From the above analysis it can be seen that working on the international arena and participate in international projects is a good way of finding human and financial resources as well as opportunities for international activities. Moreover, the international collaboration provides access to networks of other HEIs working internationally, the private sector and other stakeholders. However, in order to make best use of resources it is important that international efforts and international dimension are institutionalized into the annual and strategic plans rather than marginalized (Knight, de Wit, 1995). That seems to be still in the process of developing.

Another aspect was mentioned with respect to the faculty level budget available for internationalization activities is that there are central funds available to fund specific posts in

faculties to support the development of internationalization (H03, H04). The faculty of Education and International studies is taken as an example. When it comes to internationalization activities, the main funding is distributed from the faculty budget. The faculty receives funds from the institution for running the activities and part of the sum is available for work with internationalization and promoting it (H04). Moreover, the faculty is acquiring additional funding for the development projects and collaborations through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) a directorate under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Important to mention, the Norwegian students receive funding support from the Norwegian State loan fund [Lånekassen] for education abroad, the Quota students get the scholarship from the Ministry of Education and Fredskorpset, the organization under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (H04).

6.3 Nature of Interpretation of Internationalization as a Strategic Policy Area

To fully understand the way internationalization as a strategic policy area is organized, funded and governed within the newly merged university college HiOA, it is important to provide the explanation and shed light on the last and final research question of “(4) *how the leadership and the administrators of the institution interpret internationalization after the merger was formalized in 2011?*”. In order to provide an empirical point of reference, the interviewees were asked to explain why and how the professionally oriented university college tries to engage into internationalization, and how is it being operationalized eventually. The analyses of the data yielded various interpretations of internationalization within HiOA as well as diverse institutional rationales for internationalization amongst the leadership and the administration.

The findings indicate that the interpretation of internationalization at HiOA could be categorized as: taken for granted aspect, as an expectation, as a tool for raising institution's standards and achieving the final goal to become a university and finally, as an opportunity based approach. Each of the mentioned characteristics is the different way internationalization can be interpreted within HiOA.

6.3.1 Internationalization as taken-for-granted aspect

In the literature review it was discussed (see chapter 2.3) that the concept of internationalization has grown so dramatically and became immensely broad, as Knight (2013) states:

“after several decades of intense development internationalization has grown in scope, scale and importance” (ibid: 84)

This points out that topic of internationalization is so all-embracing that it covers a lot of dynamics and the number of aspects within HEIs (f. ex. as it is supposed to stimulate the quality of education, contribute to the multicultural society, provide academics and students with the right skills, etc.) both at institutional, national and international levels. Accordingly, the idea that internationalization is entrenched into different aspects within the college was actively supported by most of the respondents where a few of them mentioned that in case a HEI doesn't mention internationalization in its institutional strategic plan, then this organization would significantly stand out amongst the others, as today all HEIs also in the Norwegian context put a strong emphasis on internationalization. Moreover, the interviewees often stated that engagement into internationalization activities is something that every ambitious institution is expected to perform (H02, H03, H04). Therefore, HiOA needs to have a strong focus on it (H02). Here internationalization is perceived as a pressure that is coming from the state, to which the institution fully complies.

The data reveals that the respondents have a solid understanding of the institutional template of the university college. The ideal template implies a set of long established essentials at play that any HEI is expected to have: a) a high concentration of talent, i.e. integration of teaching and research, academics who publish, students who graduate; b) linkage to the environment/society, i.e. acquirement resources³⁹ for conducting research, offering a rich learning environment; c) efficient governance, i.e. strategic vision, innovation, flexibility; d) solid internationalization efforts (Altbach and Salmi, 2011).

One of the respondents stated “you can't be a flourishing university without having a strong focus on internationalization” (H04). This is particularly relevant as HiOA is currently

³⁹ Public budget resources, research grants, etc.

moving towards achieving the university status. To support this claim, a number of interviewees pointed out the similar thought:

“...in Norway, we just have to follow the main road within this [internationalization] field” (H01)

“...all Norwegian HEIs have put internationalization high on their agenda and that is something that we also HAVE TO do” (H04).

From this perspective correspondingly, the interpretation of internationalization within the institution could be construed not as an environmental pressure but as a taken-for-granted aspect. The tendency is that internationalization has become a vital part of any HEIs and it's not perceived as a unique, special aspect of the institution to any further extent but rather a “must have”. In this manner, HiOA is deemed to reproduce actions and practices of the institutional environment with respect to internationalization that have become historically repeated, habitual, predictable and taken-for-granted actions (Oliver, 1991).

6.3.2 Internationalization as an expectation

The data suggests that the interpretation of internationalization within HiOA is also greatly connected to the expectations from the government, namely the Ministry of Education's Internationalization White Paper (Report No. 14 (2008–2009)) and the Norwegian Quality Reform (2003). As one of the respondents claimed, the latter has triggered international development at the large national scale (H01). While the Internationalization White Paper that is sustained by the hearings around internationalization from the Ministry of Education to the Norwegian Parliament (Report No. 14 (2008-2009)), introduced the explicit directions for following internationalization and emphasized its importance at the same time (H01, H02). As explained by one of the respondent, the institution's internationalization focus, strategy and “whatever is written about internationalization in HiOA” (H01), normally has lots of parallels if one compare it to internationalization strategies in any other HEI in the national context. From the above reasoning, it is clear that the way HiOA's institutional strategy (see section 5.2.1) and the action plans for the internationalization activities (see section 5.3) developed within HiOA, in a substantial way, are in line with the guidelines and the core objectives of the Report to the Parliament (Report No. 14 (2008-2009)) (H01). By the same token, it establishes the framework conditions for further development and priorities for

education in Norway with respect to internationalization (see section 2.3.2).

For HiOA, the following statement by senior administrators represented the majority view of the interviewees: internationalization in their understanding is “a great number of things a truly international institution should be engaged into” (H03). Similarly, for their counterparts internationalization refers to doing things whatever they might be, that will have an impact on both students and staff, in terms of giving them a more international and global perspective. However, the justification they gave for HiOA’s actions in internationalizing are to some extent different, and are clearly aligned with the institutions’ outlook, values and beliefs. According to HiOA’s institutional strategy plan (Strategy 2020), the institution aspires to be ‘an international university that is committed to the region’ with a strong focus on the diversity aspect, which is believed “to stimulate equality and expect tolerance of the life philosophy, cultural background and the gender of others” (Strategy, 2020: 3). Therefore, the respondents are conscious that internationalization activities need to be underpinned by their institution’s international positioning. Moreover, HiOA aspires in the near future to be a good national university and its goal through internationalization will, first and foremost, be to raise the standards in professional disciplines by linking them to the knowledge development taking place in R&D not only nationally but also to a big extent internationally (Strategy, 2020). As such, it is natural that respondents interpret internationalization in terms of their institutional ability to enhance the global perspective of its students and faculty which, in turn, should enable the university college to better serve HiOA’s bridging role by promoting links with other countries in the world.

In this context, it can be assumed that there is an external pressure coming from the institutional external environment, in terms of this study it is the government, to internationalize HEIs. This is the environmental pressure to which HiOA tries to respond to in number of different ways (also connected to the environment). When the certain expectations, i.e. the governmental reform and the merger, are the environment, these dynamics tend to put certain pressures on the institution. In this case, the institutional norms within the institution are subject to change. As a result, this creates some uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the future “rules of game” for the institution. A contrary explanation is that, this pressure can be seen as a trigger for providing an opportunity for developing clear, better, and well-defined future institutional norms and strategies for internationalization

(H01). Otherwise, in the absence of well-defined institutional standard pattern of behavior, it is not always graspable which action will be distinguished as legitimate.

6.3.3 Internationalization as a tool for raising standards

It was emphasized a number of times that internationalization is seen as an instrument to increase the quality of education and research with the university college (H04). This pattern came directly from the White Paper for internationalization (2008-2009). In the eyes of one of the interviewees, internationalization is not a goal in itself but rather a certain expectation, an opportunity for a balanced development:

“... to be engaged into internationalization is not a goal per se; internationalization is not a goal – it is a tool for raising standards, a means to achieve quality (H03).

The Quality Reform emphasized that internationalization should be a part of an overall strategy for HEIs. The international dimension of academic research is also expressed in the Quality Reform (see section 2.3); hence in the eyes of the interviewees, internationalization in HiOA, to an extent, is an instrument to link education and research. The aim is not only to contribute to improving quality, increasing research productivity so that education programs and the institution itself become more attractive and competitive both nationally and internationally, but also to acquire a lot of external resources that are coming through internationalization (H04). In this sense, internationalization is perceived to be linked to the national policy Quality Reform.

Some of the interpretations of internationalization are considerably linked to research and research-related activities (H03, H04). Several informants stress that research is intrinsically international (H04) as it has always been dependent on international cooperation and academic networks. As research is considered to be a fundamental purpose of HEIs, it was also expressed in HiOA's strategic plan 2020 that the institution is sufficiently working on lifting its research and that wouldn't be possible without working internationally. In this manner, international research collaborations could be seen as another environmental aspect, however different than the ministerial one. Here it comes from the researchers themselves

who see the need and have the ambitions to collaborate internationally.

The international dimension of academic research is also highlighted. In this way the leadership and the administrators at HiOA give more importance and priority to integrate an international dimension into teaching/learning, research and service mandates. As the Quality Reform emphasized that internationalization should be a part of an overall strategy at the universities and university colleges, the concept “internationalization at home” has become increasingly important focus area (Report No. 14 (2008–2009: 13)). Attracting foreign researchers and teaching staff, establishing courses and degree programs taught in English and increasing internationalization in the local HEIs are some of the activities related to internationalization at home. In order to follow the goals of the Bologna declaration, HiOA has also invested a significant amount of effort, time and money to make ensure that all students have the opportunity to gain the international experience from studying abroad (Kehm, Michelsen & Vabø, 2010 in Ahola et al., 2014). By doing so, internationalization is seen as an opportunity to enable the university college community to value the institution’s environmental, economic and social interdependence in a globalized world and in this way to prepare staff and students to interact in an international and intercultural context.

From the above reasoning, internationalization could be interpreted as a tool for international research collaboration, where internationalization profits from an international research community contributes both to institutional and national research. In terms of this case study, these interpretations underline the academic justifications for selecting it as a priority area where internationalization can be seen as an opportunity for HiOA in terms of reaching the ultimate goal to become a university. Therefore, the importance of internationalization has been strongly emphasized by the majority of respondents (H01, H03, H04).

A rather contradictive but yet interesting statement was presented by one of the respondent who pointed out that in average most of the staff at HiOA is not interested in internationalization per se (H03). To support this claim, it was clarified that those colleagues who have never lived abroad for more than six months most likely do not have any genuine interest in internationalization; they do not put much value upon it and consequently, they do not have the substantial exposure to different cultures as opposed to those who obtained certain international experience. Another respondent indicated that some colleagues within the institution see internationalization as a threat to Norwegian language and society (H04). Thus, there are dilemmas and different views as to the interpretation of internationalization in

the organization.

6.3.4 Internationalization as an opportunity-based approach

As explained by the respondent, the reason why HiOA puts a strong emphasis on mentioning internationalization activities, international cooperation, diversity, multiculturalism (see Chapter 5) in a number of the institutional documents, simply because

“... without internationalization we [HiOA] cannot progress; we need new ideas, new practices, we need different input – we need to be challenged. That’s why internationalization is important” (H03)

Therefore, it has been found that the leadership and the administrative staff at HiOA to some extent employ the opportunity-based approach to internationalization, where internationalization is perceived as an opportunity, as a call for action with the idea of positive consequences and the prospect for international cooperation, where the university college attempts to take an action for further advanced development. As it was further elaborated, one of the intentions of why internationalization activities, international cooperation and development are in focus in a number of institutional documents, is for the reason that HiOA seeks to get a chance and aspires to point out in which direction the college is going with respect to internationalization (H03). On the other hand, internationalization policy within HiOA can also be seen as an opportunity, which leads to: enlargement, contribution, and an opportunity for the institutional development (Strategy 2020).

The reason striving for internationalization was, according to the sources of evidence, clearly academic and educational, rather than economic, which is a growing trend in many areas of the world (Knight, 2013). In fact, the economic reasons were not mentioned in the context of internationalization of education and teaching. When it comes to the research, the economic aspects were mainly emphasized by the representatives of the institutional top leadership who see internationalization as a tool for increasing the international reputation and prestige of the university college and as a tool to finding beneficial partners for research collaboration.

When inquired to articulate the *rationale* for engaging in internationalization and selecting it as one of the priority areas on the institutional level, most of the respondents acknowledged that internationalization is formally entrenched both in academic values (improvement of the

quality of education and research and the international dimension of teaching and learning, research collaboration agreements, student and staff exchange schemes, extension of academic horizon, internationalization at home) (H02, H04), economic rationales (investment in the national economy, labor market, financial incentives (H03) and political rationales (foreign policy, national educational demand, national and regional identity) (H01, H03). HiOA is willing to actively participate in in the international research arena and seeks to build a stronger relationship between education and R&D. It has also been noted that academic justifications are connected to the national policy, as the Quality Reform provides the interviewees with the reasons to internationalize. Moreover, internationalization is also interpreted as by the informants as boarder-crossing activities that are aiming at strengthening the quality of research and education in the professionally oriented institution. To put it another way, the informants for the most part employ into the interpretation of internationalization a close integration of economic, political and academic rationales. To better integrate the international exchange students both academically and socially, the goal of the international office is to develop one or two English language semesters in each faculty in which international and Norwegian students attend the same class (internationalization at home) this is a also a mean to increase international applicants to the university college.

6.4 Discussion: Internationalization as a Strategic Policy Area

The aim of the analysis was to investigate the importance of organizational environment of HiOA and look into the way internationalization as a strategic policy area is organized within the institution to help it reach its ultimate goal of becoming a university. In this discussion section the organizational development when it comes to internationalization in line with the analytical framework will be interpreted according to the five dimensions by which internationalization as a policy area is being characterized by Oliver (1991). Those dimensions are cause, constituents, content, control and context of the policy area. Therefore it will help to shed the light on the relationship between internationalization as a strategic policy area at HiOA and its actual development that took place in the university college since it has merged.

6.4.1 Patterns of organizational strategic responses to internationalization

When examining the *cause*, rationale and the set of expectations behind the internationalization as a strategic policy area at HiOA, the data obtained is broadly consistent with the major trends that both economic (efficiency) and social (legitimacy) fitness are being pursued (Oliver, 1991). By giving the regulatory frameworks and directions for internationalization policy to become more efficient, more internationally active on the global arena and to have a focus on the research-based activities, the Norwegian Ministry of Education together with the other national agencies involved into internationalization (SIU), seem to intend making the university college a better performer on the national and/or international context, even if the central budget available for internationalization is being limited. That would imply less economic and financial burden for the government, whilst at the same time obtaining the expected high quality research-based knowledge and international expertise is what expected from the university college in creating the knowledge society (Strategy 2020). There is also, however, a further point to be considered. Another cause behind having internationalization strategy at HiOA could be perceived an attempt to enhance the University College's legitimacy by increasing its social relevance in Norwegian society. That could be done, for instance, by achieving the "university" status for HiOA, which is seen as a tool for raising its standards. As Norwegian HE is entering into a more and more globalized world, the significance of internationalization, diversity, research and quality of HEIs is not merely being compared and related to the other Norwegian HEIs to any further extent. Conversely, HEIs are becoming increasingly competitive both on the national and global arena. Therefore, to assure the university college's legitimacy, the institution is pressured to appear more socially fit or even acceptable in order to prove its merit in value creation in the society when compared to the other HEIs not only in the national context but also worldwide. For these reasons, the rationale for HiOA to become more internationally oriented can therefore, be interpreted as aiming at increasing the social fitness of the institution. The response within HiOA to its environment varies depending on the angle from which the national policy instrument on internationalization (the regulations and guidelines) was perceived. While the administrative staff within HiOA gives the impression to have rather high expectations of the institution's involvement into internationalization activities and its development, the leadership of the institution, in retrospect, acknowledged the need to

improve the internal structures, improve the institution's policy towards recruiting more international people in order to provide sounder, all-encompassing conditions for developing comprehensive internationalization. HiOA strives for economic accountability and rationalization in the form of both short- and long-term economic gains in order to increase institution's economic performance; therefore, economic fitness is likely to be seen as a legitimate goal. Nonetheless, it has been actively discussed within the institution that internationalization has a positive impact on not only social but also economic fitness, as many argue that student and academic mobility is significant source of income. HiOA's staff may also question the legitimating effects of being an internationally oriented HEI and receiving international students, notwithstanding the government's assurances that such status will be beneficial for the institution's social and economic fitness. This debate is appeared to have taken place within HiOA not long after the merger process was formalized (H03), nevertheless after several external evaluations of HiOA's strategic behavior with respect to internationalization it became obvious that the idea of becoming the institution with the solid international policy area mattered a great deal to particular leaders and administrators at HiOA.

By determining the *constituents* imposing regulations and expectations on HiOA with respect to internationalization, the key ones are the Ministry of Education and Research and other ministries⁴⁰ that are also involved in national policies for internationalization of HE. Nevertheless, the Norwegian Ministry of Education has the responsibility for implementing governmental policy for HE. Together with other constituents responsible for advancing their cultural and HE interests abroad, for ex. SIU, they play the leading role in HE and national policies for internationalization of Norwegian HE. Those players are involved financially by supporting certain projects, programs and funding schemes in national HE context. Furthermore, these actors shape the responsibility for policies for internationalization of HEIs and policies that are closely related to internationalization (f.ex. visa/residence permit regulations for international students). In fact, HiOA in itself can also act as a constituent that interprets internationalization as an opportunity, as the "call for action" (f.ex. opportunity to provide studies abroad, to be an attractive strategic partner for international research collaborations, etc.). Other constituents are also academics who profit from various sources

⁴⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for Social Affairs

of international project funding, and the students who find better opportunities and gain international relevant experience for the potential Norwegian employers from their studies abroad. These are the constituents that are benefiting. However, it was debated that HiOA loses certain financial resources by sending students out, experiencing at the same time an economic and social damage, as it has jeopardized its resources without getting practically anything in return. Therefore, HiOA would rather choose to have the incoming students for the sake of the financial benefit from the government (H03). Accordingly, the way HiOA handles internationalization policy area and the way it responds to the environmental pressure is generally shaped by the contrasting attitudes, interests of the above-mentioned constituents.

When it comes to the *content* of internationalization policy, it is interesting to look into its substance, and determine the degree to which the involvement of internationalization from the possible constituents is coherent with the internal strategies towards internationalization policy area at HiO, namely into the hearings around internationalization of HE in the report the Norwegian Government has presented to the parliament (Report no.14 to the Storting, (2008-2009)). This will help to indicate to which extent the university college responded to it. For both of the institutional strategies (action plans) for internationalization at HiOA (see section 7.2.2), the white paper functioned as a certain template that was expected to be followed by the HEIs. Internationalization at home was seen as a trigger for developing an internationally-oriented content in the educational courses and programs in English at all levels, a close link between education and research was seen as an important tool for giving internationalization activities better academic basis. The white paper gave the incentive to broaden internationalization element for variety of opportunities: agreement and cooperation programs, different funding schemes that researchers apply for, an integration of an international perspective in all areas of activity, etc. For the institutional strategy at HiOA internationalization entails cooperation across national boundaries on the development of common study programs, courses and professional development. This requires an integrated review of content, and it is obvious that HiOA has already come a long way in this work.

The analysis of HiOA's overall institutional strategy (Strategy 2020) and of its both action plans for internationalization showed that HiOA covered all those areas in the strategic documents. By the same token, an interesting question is what role this 'template' played in developing the Strategy 2020 and, in particular, the action plans for internationalization within HiOA. One informant referred to the Quality Reform that emphasized that internationalization should be part of an overall strategy of the HEIs, and followed by the

incentives coming from the White Paper, it was concluded that the environment did influence the development of the institutional strategic documents and internationalization as an overall policy area within the college (H01). Another respondent was more critical by pointing out that regardless the suggested guidelines for internationalization; HiOA still has great potential for increased internationalization (H03). Albeit HiOA has developed a great deal of agreements with HEIs abroad that are important to expand on, there are still cases where the links between courses, faculties and management are to an extent weak. That explains by the fact that the organizational structure of the institution has predominantly been influenced by the changes in the environment caused by the merger process. In this way it is important that internationalization is followed up with strategic priorities from the institutional top leadership as the promoting content for greater internationalization must be directed at several institutional actors, not only students. All things considered, HiOA's response to the environmental pressures was facilitated by the fact that its content was mostly met with complying within the university college.

When it comes to the *control* means by which the environmental pressure being is imposed on HiOA, it is clear that putting it into practice was mostly exerted by pressure for voluntary compliance. It was examined that internationalization as a strategic areas is organized through voluntarily diffusion of institutional norms, values and practices rather than through legal coercion behind institutional norms and requirements. On the other hand, control could also be seen as an opportunity structure, i.e. it is a way in which the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the other constituents has determined that HEIs need to move forward and progress. At the same time it is also one of the means to have more choice and freedom for action and access to resources. In case there is any proposal that means that there are a lot of chances and opportunities there in terms of internationalization. Even though there was no actual legal coercion that would have forced HiOA to be involved into internationalization, the institution's willingness to be involved into this process is immense, first and foremost, for both financial and reputational resources.

The environmental *context*, in which internationalization strategic policy area is being handled at HiOA, helps to understand and determine response of the university college. Notably, management and the administrative staff acknowledge that HiOA operates in the global environment. Correspondingly, most of them try to make allowance for the global developments with respect to internationalization and their impact on the national policy. As a result, most of the staff dealing with internationalization issues at HiOA has a critical view

as to their inability to prognosticate the future conditions of its environment (H01). Uncertainty is a significant element of the context that influences HiOA's conformity or resistance to the institutional demands and expectations. It is expressed that in the case of uncertainty the institution is likely to imitate other HEIs' institutional models, strategic actions, etc.

6.4.2 Organizational development as a response to the environment

No organization is decoupled from its environment, as they all are dependent on its environment for money, reputation, resources and recognition (Gornitzka, 1999). Therefore here can be seen the relationship between the institution (HiOA) and its environment. When the environment creates certain expectations, demands or opportunities, in light of this case study, it is interesting to analyze how HiOA is dealing with this development. After the Quality Reform came into effect, the issue of internationalization was for the first time brought up to the forefront of Norwegian HE policy agenda. Straight after the reform followed the overall guideline from the Norwegian Government that has established a framework for further development and priorities for internationalization. Accordingly these guidelines, expectations and incentives from the Ministry created the same institutional pressures on all public HEIs. The institutional strategies for responding to these pressures differed, as individual universities might have dealt differently with the standards provided that for example, university colleges.

In attempt at analyzing HiOA's response to the above-mentioned environmental conditions, it is important to take into consideration that the Norwegian social context and traditions (see chapter 2) provides a frame within which the defiance and manipulation strategies, as well as the acquiescence type of strategic responses (see section 3.3) are relatively rare occurrence for the university college to use particularly when it comes to internationalization as a strategic policy area.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that the type of strategic responses used by HiOA for the most part are compromising and avoiding in terms of the given case study. The findings forward the view that HiOA has its own institutional autonomy and the institutional practice of negotiation and partial adaptation stimulates reaching of compromises, both with the internal and external constituents. As follows, its institutional behavior implies that inertly adapting to

the external pressure, where internationalization is used as a resource to becoming a university.

Once a serious conflict of interests between the reached compromise and institution's internal goals, activities and certain expectations occur, the strategy of avoidance seems to be favored over the explicit defying or manipulating the compromise type of response (Maassen 2002). This indicates that in this case, HiOA is obstructing the impact of external pressures, for instance, by creating new structures, committees with the college that are expected to handle the external pressures, demands and expectations without affecting the other strategic areas within the institution.

For the analysis of the development of internationalization as a strategic policy area and the way it has been interpreted within the university college, Oliver's (1991) organizational strategic responses to the environmental influences is directly applicable in characterizing it depending of the following five characteristics (discussed in Chapter 3): cause, constituents, content, control and context. In doing so, this framework serves as the tool for answering the mentioned above research questions and explaining the organizational development that took place within HiOA with respect to internationalization.

7 Conclusion

The concluding chapter of the master thesis first offers a brief summary of the research project. Then, the key findings and their relevance to the four research questions will be highlighted. The central focus of this master thesis is on investigating the interaction between Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) environmental pressures coming from a number of constituents and organizational strategies with respect to internationalization as a strategic policy area. By looking into the way internationalization as a strategic policy area is organized, mobilized and interpreted with the regard to its environment and it's external influence, and the factors that influenced the way internationalization has developed into a strategic policy area within the institution in the four years since it has merged, the findings indicate that the external environment of HiOA influences its internationalization policies.

Internationalization in HEIs may be analyzed as a case of organizational change (Gornitzka & Maassen 2000, see also Gornitzka 1999). In the last four years, HiOA is undergoing the final stage of organizational change as the result of the merger that was formalized in 2011. As a result, the university college has had an advantage of a fresh start to redesign its organizational and governance structure, its main strategies concerning internationalization strategies – that was a combination of the strategic vision as to internationalization from both OUC and AUC prior to the merger. In this process the question is what is the newly merged university college going to do with internationalization? In this way, the advantage of the merged institution as opposed to a non-merged, rests on the premise that the merged one (the case of HiOA) is not so much confined, limited or even “imprisoned” in its existing organizational structure, which is normally difficult to change in a HEI with well-established organizational set of rules, institutional culture, identities, traditions, values, etc. As HiOA a newly established university college (since 2011), by the virtue of merger, it was compelled to redesign its organizational structure anew. With this regard, the institutional leadership has been compliant, ready and willing to go through the radical renewal of its internationalization policy, rather compared to any other HEI that has not undergone a merger process. At the same time another assumption is that instead of the conformable radical renewal, HiOA might fall back into the paths the two separate institutions (OUC and AUC) were taken before

the merger, therefore one could assume they have tried in a pragmatic way to combine them.

1) To which extent did the merger effect the integration of both university colleges' (OUC's and AUC's) strengths regarding the internationalization dimension?

The organization of internationalization as a whole policy area within the university college in regard to its funding and governance structures is relatively well established; however, the empirical investigation gives a more mixed picture concerning the effect of the merger. In some areas internationalization is still under the process of active development as there are the numbers of aspects with that are not functioning optimally. The reason is that during the merger internationalization was to an extent a peripheral issue in the whole process, therefore it did not get the attention it was expected to get both in the development of the new organizational structure, the integration of the various units in the administration, the description and development of the rules of the new organizational structure, etc. Once the organizational elements of merger process have become relatively in place, internationalization is seen to be coming back from its margining position, however, feebly adapted to the new organizational structure and the new organizational culture of the newly merged university college. Therefore, our overall question of interest is how has internationalization become a strategic policy area at HiOA?

The findings indicate that internationalization has become a strategic policy area at HiOA and one of the means and tools HiOA uses to mobilize resources that help the institution to reach its ultimate goal in achieving a university status. A merger between institutions that complement each other can strengthen the new institution's position in the national and international HE context (Skodvin, 2014). This can also be applied to internationalization area, which by combining the strengths of both university colleges developed into the strategic policy area in a new institution (HiOA), which has had an advantage of a fresh start to combine the internationalization policies and internationalization practices of the two previously separate institutions (OUC and AUC) and to innovate its internationalization policies and practices by streamlining in a more efficient the way it operates within the institution.

2) To which extent has the developments in the institutional environment contributed to making internationalization into a strategic policy area? And how, if so, has HiOA responded to it?

The investigation of the research question started by assuming that the external environment of HiOA influences institution's internationalization policies. In terms of this study it can be argued that institutional strategies for internationalization are being formulated in accordance to the number of developments in the institutional environment. It was observed how the regulations and national policy initiatives strengthen and push activities and policies, which are strongly justified by internal basic values (Frolich, 2005). For that reason, institutions are seen to be deeply embedded in their environment with which they established multiple relations. There are number of expectations and demands from the government and the Ministry of Education as to HiOA. The EU's policies, the Bologna Process, the Norwegian Quality Reform, the White Paper on Internationalization set the stage of why internationalization has become important at HiOA. The initiatives and other processes through national government regulations and policies directly or indirectly are putting pressures on HEIs in order to "homogenize" their educational delivery. The Bologna Process and the national Quality Reform (2003) have become driving forces that contributed to promoting internationalization and to a large extent emphasized student mobility through formal agreements and strategic partnerships established at HiOA as to which the institution follows the rules and accepts norms (Oliver, 19991). An interesting observation is that cooperation with the international strategic cooperation is considered as a certain instrument to increase the quality of research and education within the institution. This explains the reason how the environment the institution is located in influences HiOA's engagement into international activities. The findings indicate that both the EU policies and the national regulations have a strong linkage and impact on the way internationalization policy is developing at HiOA.

3) How has internationalization been handled (developed) within HiOA?

In light of this thesis, to have examined the way internationalization is organized, mobilized and interpreted within HiOA with the regard to its environment and its external influence, the analysis showed that the assumption that HiOA endeavors to actively innovate its internationalization policies and practices and to streamline more efficient the way it operates

within the institution seems to be the most pertinent in relation to the study. Given the fact that internationalization might cause some changes within the institution where it is being actively implemented and promoted, HiOA is attempting to change or reorganize both how it is organized, governed and funding services, activities and practices around internationalization and the way the institutional leadership deliberates on internationalization as a universal tool used to meet the demands and pressures from the environment in order to adapt it to new realities, namely – the ultimate goal to achieve the university status. Indirectly, this is also changing the environment itself.

4) How has internationalization been interpreted at HiOA after the merger was formalized in 2011?

Given the identical national and institutional context of the university college, the respondents expressed divergent views when they were asked to comment on the meaning and interpretation of internationalization within a university college. The findings indicate various interpretations of internationalization within HiOA as well as diverse institutional rationales for internationalization amongst the leadership and the administration. The underlying observation shows that internationalization has become a rather strong strategic policy area as it is perceived to be strongly connected to research, education and the national policy. However, it is argued that internationalization to some extent is still under the process of active development as there are the number of aspects in regard to internationalization that are not functioning optimally. This perceived to be one of the results of the merger. Once the organizational elements of merger process are relatively in its place, internationalization is seen to be coming back from its margining position, however, feebly adapted to the new organizational structure and the new organizational culture of the newly merged university college. Internationalization is perceived to have taken for granted character of institutional rules, seen as a tool for raising institution's standards and acquiring external resources that come through it. Furthermore, it is perceived as an opportunity for the further development and acquiring resources with the ultimate goal to achieve the university status. The meanings and interpretations of internationalization among the staff within the institution change with respect to the number of the rationales, incentives, and activities, political and economical conditions within which it takes place. To fully understand the findings, it is interesting to investigate the reason of why internationalization became a strategic policy area at HiOA is

first, HiOA's ambition to become a university using internationalization as one of the tools for achieving this goal. Second, the regulatory frameworks and directions for internationalization policy to become more efficient, more internationally active on the global arena and to have a focus on the research-based activities, the Norwegian Ministry of Education together with the other national agencies involved into internationalization (SIU), seem to intend making HiOA a better performer on the national and/or international context.

In general this case study aims to contribute to the literature on internationalization and to an extent to the literature on mergers in HE on creating and developing internationalization strategic policy area at HEIs that underwent through a merger. While this thesis provided insight into analyzing internationalization from an organizational perspective at the institutional level, thereby it would be interesting to continue the research by exploring and comparing how the institutional environment influences the way internationalization as a possible strategic area developed in other merged university colleges in Norwegian context but in a relatively different setting. Moreover, in regard to this context, it would be also of the interest to compare the way internationalization as a strategic policy area develops within the "old" traditional universities as opposed to university colleges. To conclude, both further follow up and the empirical research on the development of internationalization as a strategic policy area needs to be done in accordance to different developments in the institutional environment.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

1. Personal information

- Position at HiOA
- Number of years employed at HiOA/ OUC/ AUC
- Number of years involved into internationalization

2. Role within internationalization strategy?

- Main administrative functions

3. Experience working at OUC or AUC previously to the merger?

If yes:

- How did HiOA come together on regard to internationalization?
- Do you know anything about the crafting of the Strategy 2020 document?
- Discussion around internationalization as a potential priority area?

If no:

- Did you have an experience with the development of the Strategy 2020?

4. Why is internationalization important for HiOA? (the institutional documents express that it is)

- In your view, do you see that there is a lot of emphasis placed on it?
- Do you think HiOA engaging in it so strongly?
- Rationales for engaging into internationalization? Is it for legitimacy reasons, is it multiculturalism that the college striving for?

5. How did HiOA select internationalization as one of its priority areas?

- Actors involved?
- How did the discussion evolve? Any critics?
- Is internationalization contributing to setting the direction and the tone for HiOA? Or is it merely a trend that any HEI needs to have it?
- Reason why internationalization is so explicitly mentioned in the strategy 2020?

6. To what extent internationalization and University College's development are linked to each other?

- Have AFI&NOVA had a strong voice on how HiOA articulates its strategy for internationalization?
- Other stakeholders involved in the process of University College's internationalization?

7. How is the emphasis on internationalization developed or changed within the college in these 4 years since the merger was formalized?
 - Key actors/decision-makers wrt internationalization policy area on the institutional level? Their roles?
 - Where are the main discourses wrt internationalization are coming from?
 - Have there been particular external and/or internal conditions (pressures/demands) from the environment that have boosted the process of internationalization?
 - Which role have the institution's academics/leaders/administrators played in promoting and/or contesting the emphasis?
8. How did HiOA respond to the initiatives coming from the government and to the reform aimed at streamlining internationalization and its activities at HiOA?
 - Are EU initiatives influential? If yes: to what extent does it help or hinder HiOA to achieve its goals?
 - What was the driving force in stimulating college's international activities?
9. How is internationalization organized within HiOA?
 - Who has the leadership role and responsibility over it?
 - Why were particular people involved into internationalization?
 - How has internationalization developed in a way it is organized on the institutional level? How did merger influence this process?
10. Organizational factors that are the most significant when it comes to internationalization?
11. How does HiOA fund its internationalization activities?
 - Where does the institution obtain funding for internationalization purposes from? How is it being distributed?
 - What are the costs of an international office? What further resources might be needed to support a widening of its activities?
 - Is there central budget available for internationalization?
 - External sources of funding available for internationalization activities?
 - Does HiOA have or need strategic investing fund for internationalization?
12. Organizational and structural changes wrt internationalization policy area that have occurred due to the merger?
 - Changes in organization, funding, governance structures
13. Actors related to the merger are seen as most important in the process of strategic planning of internationalization?
 - What are the reasons for those actors to have an influence?
 - How has it developed over time?

14. Challenges for HiOA wrt to internationalization?

- Short-term/long-term

15. What can be improved at institutional level to stimulate and support its internationalization activities?

16. Benefits of having internationalization strategic policy area at HiOA?

(Questions to be directed to the institutional leadership for the further analysis of the external conditions and interactions)

a) What were the perceptions of the external conditions the institution was facing wrt internationalization as a strategic policy area?
b) Were there any environmental changes or expectations wrt internationalization that were deemed as relevant? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If so, what part of the environment was seen as appropriate? (ex: international/European level, national government, business, student market, other HEIs, buffer organizations, professional organizations, etc.?)• Were there external actors directly involved in these processes?
c) If any environmental expectations were deemed as relevant, what was the institution's conception of why such expectations were put forward? (ex: what was seen by the institution as the external actors' objectives for exerting pressure?)
d) Were these expectations/pressures/demands seen as consistent with the HiOA's own interests, ideas, or the interests and ideas of the key actors within the institution?
e) Were there the external expectations/pressures of some external actors seen as conflicting or contrary to expectations of other external actors? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If relevant: in what way was the institution or were there any different actors within the institution perceived as being "pressured"? → How or by what means was pressure exerted?• What can characterize the "response" of the institution to these perceived external demands?• What did the college do faced with them? <i>(the range can vary from "nothing", accepting and complying ("Acquiesce"), bargaining with the external constituents ("Compromise"), concealing ("Avoid"), defying ("Defy"), to actions of manipulating the external expectations ("Manipulate")</i>

17. What other information do you believe would be helpful to know about internationalization as a strategic policy area, namely the way it is organized and developed in light of the development process at HiOA?

Thank you for the time and discussion!

Appendix 2: Norway in numbers

Table 8: Norway in numbers

Norway	Higher Education
Area: 385,178 km ²	Coordinating Body: Ministry of Education and Research (<i>Kunnskapsdepartementet</i>)
GDP (total/PPP): \$353.230 billion / \$67,619 (2015 estimate)	Students in HE: 269 063 (SSB 2015)
Population: 5,136,700 (2013)	Total government expenditure on education: 15.0 % (The World Bank 2011)
Population density: 15.5 km ²	
Regional division: 19 counties (<i>fylke</i>), 432 (<i>kommune</i>)	

Ministry of Education

1990 - 1991	Ministry of Education and Research
1991 - 2002	Ministry of Church, Education and Research (<i>KUF</i>)
2002 - 2005	Ministry of Education and Research (<i>Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet</i>)
2006 - ...	Ministry of Education and Research (lit. Ministry of Knowledge) (<i>Kunnskapsdepartementet - KD</i>)

Student numbers in Norway (total)

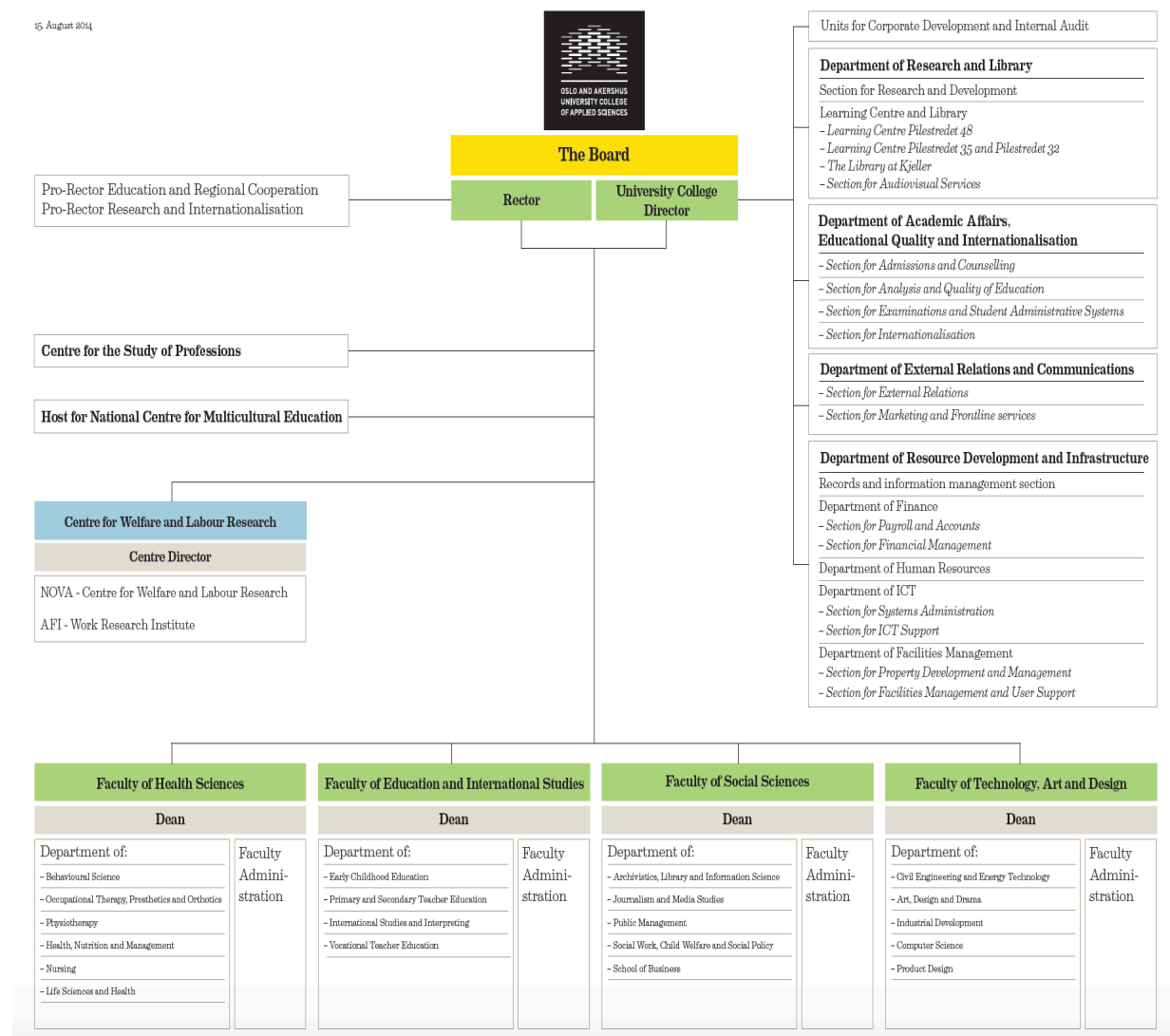
Table 9: Student numbers in Norway (total)

Institution	1990	1992	1994	1996	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Universities	46225	56849	63149	76339	74665	74205	72472	81815	86222	93721	103383	110400
State University Colleges	610	3704	7593	8822	8872	8832	9503	7137	7657	8402	9127	8800
State Colleges*	-	-	28166*	84485	89258	94636	98735	92594	86553	89580	91112	95900
Private Colleges	-	-	-	-	-	26579	24686	24191	24843	25727	38818	34400
Pedagogical Colleges	-	45	7353	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Art Colleges	-	-	319	713	780	810	842	824	788	816	840	849
Technical Colleges	-	3016	795	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Colleges	25	418	2772	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regional Colleges	828	7089	6614	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Org.	-	4017	4190	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	47688	75139	120951	170359	173575	205435	206238	206561	206063	218246	239280	250400

Table 4 – Student numbers in Norway (total)*State Colleges created in 1994 when 98 regional colleges were merged into 26 state colleges.

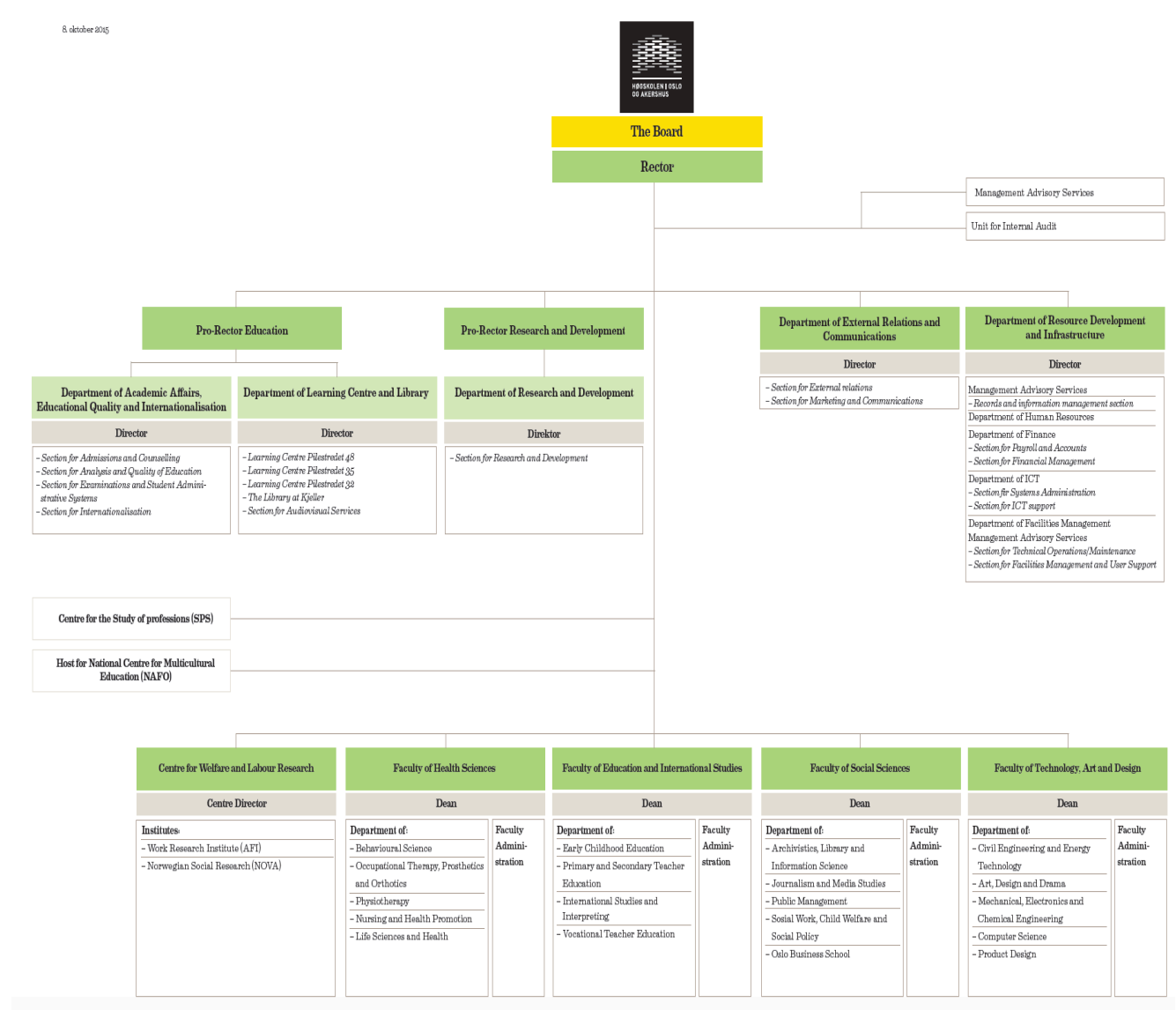
Appendix 3: HiOA's Organisational Chart

Figure 2: Organizational Chart August 2014



(Source: HiOA)

Figure 3: Organizational Chart October 2015



(Source: HiOA)